PROFILES OF TRIBAL CULTURE IN BIHAR

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PROFILES OF TRIBAL CULTURE IN BIHAR

SACHCHIDANANDA

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To

My Mother

who is no more.

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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.	American Anthropologist.
B.T.R.I.	Bulletin of the Bihar Tribal Research Institute, Ranchi.
E.A.	Eastern Anthropologist.
Ed.	Editor, Edition, Edited.
I.J.S.W.	Indian Journal of Social Work.
J.A.S.B.	Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
J.An.S.B.	Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay.
J.B.O.R.S.	Journal of the Bihar & Orissa Research Society.
J.R.A.I.	Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.
J.S.R.	Journal of the Social Research, Department of Anthropology, Ranchi University.
M.A.S.B.	Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
M.I.	Man in India.
no.	number,-s
P.	Page, pages.
Univ.	University.
V.	Volume,-s
Van.	Vanyajati.

PREFACE

Ever since India became free, interest in the life and culture of simpler communities, rural and tribal has been growing. A number of scholars working for different organisations or for their own have studied tribal life in Bihar and produced commendable results. Most of the interesting material collected in this way, however, never reaches the public. It lies in piles on the shelves of college or university libraries. Some of them are published in scientific journals and still remain out of each for the inquisitive reader. It is to remove this difficulty that I thought of this publication.

This volume is a collection of twenty two papers written by me between 1953 and 1964 on various aspects of tribal life and culture in Bihar. Most of the papers have been published in scientific journals at different times. I have not revised the paper on Birsa, the Munda leader as the information given therein represents the state of knowledge on that subject on the date of its publication i.e. 1954.

While the first paper can be taken as a general introduction to tribal culture in Bihar, the rest of the book may be divided into five parts each dealing with one specific aspect of culture. The first part in its three papers highlights important characteristics of the tribal village and tries to study it as a distinct unit. The second part deals with certain aspects of social organisation such as caste, class, Dhumkuria, position of women and role of dance and music in tribal life. The third part details the economic co-operation evident in the traditional set-up of the tribal village and brings out the problems of tribal economy in general with special reference to Bihar. The fourth part throws some light on political aspects of tribal life. Opening with a life sketch and contributions of Birsa, it contains a study of political consciousness with reference to 1957 general elections and two papers on crime and punishment among the Munda and the Santal.

The largest number of papers are in the fifth and the last section 'The Changing Scene'. Two papers in this section form part of one case study of change in a village. Two other papers deal with the broad canvas of social and cultural change in Tribal Bihar in general. One paper depicts the impact of Hindu belief and ritual on the Oraon, another details the tasks of community development in tribal areas and attempts an evaluation of such work while a third confines its attention briefly to the impact of industrialization on tribals.

Each chapter of this book was conceived as a separate paper and is self-sufficient and self-contained. It implies recurrence of the same idea or the same sentence at more than one place. In a collection of this kind, this was unavoidable.

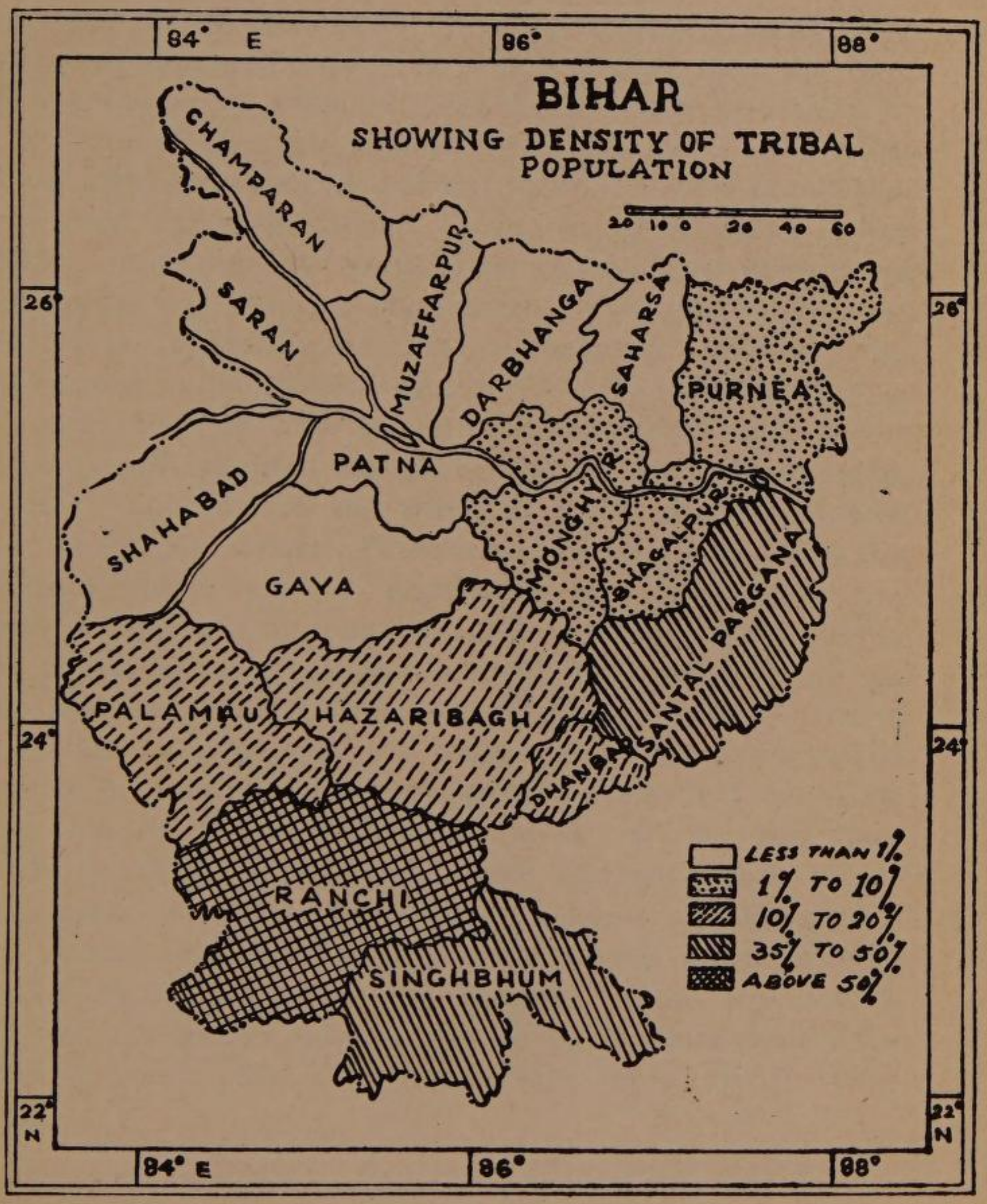
I am grateful to the editors of the journals for giving me permission to reprint the papers.

Shri Hari Mohan and Shri N. K. Ambastha have prepared the index. Shri A. R. N. Srivastava has compiled the bibliography. Shri K. Tigga has done all the photographic work. All these friends have put me under a deep debt of gratitude.

Shri M. Bhattacharya has looked after the printing and publication of the book. But for his interest the book would not have seen the light of day.

28th October, 1965
Ranchi.

SACHCHIDANANDA


84° E
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BIHAR
SHOWING DENSITY OF TRIBAL POPULATION
20 10 0 20 40 60
26°
24°
22° N
CHAMPARAN
SARAN
MUZAFFARPUR
DARBHANGA
SAHARSA
PURNEA
PATNA
SHAHABAD
GAYA
MONGHYR
BHAGALPUR
SANTAL PARGANA
PALAMAU
HAZARIBAGH
DHANBAD
RANCHI
SINGHBHUM
LESS THAN 1%
1% TO 10%
10% TO 20%
35% TO 50%
ABOVE 50%

TRIBAL CULTURE IN BIHAR

Bihar is one of those States in which there is a considerable tribal population. According to the census of 1961 the total tribal population in Bihar is 42.04 lakhs which works out to 9.50 per cent of the total population of the state. The tribes in Bihar constitute roughly one-fourth of the total population of scheduled tribes in India. There are 29 scheduled tribes in Bihar. Most of the tribes live in the five districts of Chotanagpur, viz. Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Dhanbad, Singhbhum, Palamau and in the district of Santal Parganas. They are also found in some other pockets, viz., in the hilly tracts of the sub-divisions of Sasaram and Bhabhua in Shahabad and in the districts of Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Purnea and Champaran. The most important of the tribes of Bihar are the Munda, Oraon, Santal, Ho, Kharia, Paharia and Birhor. They differ not only from the non-tribal population but also from one another in appearance, manners and customs. These differences relate to means of subsistence, social organisation, language, but no consistent corelation can be established between any of these features. Tribes speaking languages of the same family may differ in their means of subsistence. There may be tribes, more or less on the same economic level, but they may have no linguistic affinity. They range widely as regards their means of subsistence. There are food gatherers, hunters, shifting cultivators, as also permanent agriculturists among them. Among the tribes mentioned above the Munda, Oraon, Ho, Santal, Kharia, etc. are settled agriculturists living in parmanent villages and the description of tribal culture below mostly refers to them.

THE TRIBAL VILLAGE

The population of a tribal village consists of a majority of tribals but most villages also contain families of a few functional castes, such as, Lohar, Ghasi, Mahali, Jolaha, Ahir etc. There is seldom any great difference in social and economic status between individual villagers. Due to alien influence we

find a class system developing among the Munda of Panch Pargana and the Ho of Kolhan. With these exceptions, the democratic character of the social set-up in a tribal village is remarkable and a feeling of brotherhood links man to man within the village. This is exemplified in artificial kinship links which are forged between members of different classes and communities in the village.

Villages of various tribes differ in setting and size. They are generally situated on some eminence or on the bank of some stream at some distance from the forest from which most of the villagers get the timber for house construction as well as for fuel. The biggest village may have as many as eighty houses, whilst the small ones among the Sauria Paharias, Hill Kharias, Birhors, etc. may have only ten houses or even less. The houses seem to be huddled together without any plan. The types of dwellings built by the various tribes differ from the one-roomed conical huts of Birhors to spacious three structure house of Munda and Oraon and some bunglow type houses of the Ho. The house pattern is generally expressive of their cultural level. Each house has a kitchen-garden attached to it. Space is provided for keeping cattle, fowl, pigs, goats, etc. Some houses provide a corner for their ancestral deities called 'Ading'. Most of the houses are built of mud and roofed with tiles.

Most tribal villages have an 'Akhra' or dancing ground where people gather for regular dancing in the evening and also during festivals. In some villages we find the 'Sasan' or the bone-burial ground where the remains of the descendants of the original settlers of the village are interred after an annual ceremony. Most villlages also have the 'Sarna' or the sacred grove where village deities are supposed to reside and where worship is offered to them by the village priest. The youth dormitory is an important institution in most Oraon villages. 'Dhumkuria' as the boy's dormitory is known, as a school of social discipline and training from which the tribal youth learns not only his lore but imbibes all the qualities which will make him a useful member of the tribal community. The boy is sent there at the age of 11 or 12 and remains there till marriage. The 'Dhumkuria' boys act as a corporate body under a monitor called 'Mahato'. They learn singing and dancing. Boys and girls are not only initiated into the mysteries of sex but also learn the value of the

dignity of labour and receive training in leadership and organisation. Youth dormitories are not important among other tribes.

TRIBAL ECONOMY

Simplicity and self-sufficiency are the twin characteristics of the economic life of the tribal village in Bihar. There are still villages situated in remote forest areas which, due to lack of communications, have few economic links with the outside world. But most of them maintain certain economic relations with other villagers both tribal and non-tribal. Tribal economy is mostly a subsistence economy. Agriculture is the most important occupation of the tribals, but only a few are able to raise sufficient crops to keep the wolf away from the door for the whole year. Agricultural operations are carried out by the combined effort of men and women but organisation of male and female labour varies according to the agricultural technique employed. The spirit of co-operation displayed in some activities by all the families of a village united in one task is reflected in the singing of songs by women while engaged in work. The main crops raised on dry lands are millet and a variety of pulses as well as certain types of dry rice. But the most important crop of tribal Bihar is rice grown on low-lying irrigated fields. The kitchen-garden is reserved for the production of vegetables.

The importance of cattle and other live-stock in tribal economy is considerable. Oxen, buffaloes and cows are yoked to the plough as well as to carts. Goats, fish and fowls are used for sacrificial purposes and supplement tribal diet to a large extent.

Hunting among the agricultural tribes has been to reduced a ceremonial and with the disappearance of forests not many animals are left to be hunted. Fishing is a joyful pastime for children, men engaging in it in times of scarcity. The makings of mats of different sizes and materials, ropes, collection of lac and rearing of silk worms add to the meagre income of the tribals. Most of the villagers make their own ploughs and other wooden articles of daily use, but purchase iron implements from the village blacksmith and earthenware from the local 'hats' or markets. Money plays a limited role in tribal economy and while transactions may be large the actual money passing in it may be small. Every area is served by a number of hats held on

different days of the week at different places. Women come to the market to dispose of their surplus produce as well as to buy certain articles for domestic consumption, such as salt, kerosene oil, cloth etc. The market is a place for social gathering and many people go there just for the fun of it.

FOOD, DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

The main food of the tribals is boiled rice so long as the stocks last. For most tribesmen the months from November to April are months of plenty and the rest of the year is a lean period when people live on Gondli, millet, mahua flowers etc. Sweet potatoes sometimes supplement food. Pulses of various kinds, if produced by the tribals, figure in the diet as also leafy vegetables, pumpkin, brinjal, onion etc., grown in the kitchen-garden. Milk is not taken. Fowl, sheep, goats and in certain parts pigs are eaten. The tribals prepare at home rice-beer known as 'Hanria' or 'Illi' which is rich in vitamin content. It infuses fresh energy in fatigued peasants. It has an important role in tribal worship also.

The traditional dress of a young man is a narrow piece of cloth tied round the waist and struck on the back. Men's ceremonial dress is called 'Kareya' and woman's 'Paria'. Children go about naked till the age of seven or eight. Educated or converted tribals keep a dhoti and a shirt for going out, while women likewise put on a mill-made sari and printed cotton blouse. Ordinarily, the upper part of the body of both men and women is left bare. Tribal youths and women are greatly fond of ornaments. We may see tribal women in the markets laden with necklaces. Women are fond of sticking flowers in their hair and wear cheap brass and silver ornaments in the ear, nose, neck, hands and feet. Some necklaces are made of glass beads. Tribals are famed for keeping their hair tidy by combing it regularly with wooden combs which are sometimes stuck in their hair. Women are fond of tatooing their forehead and arms. Sometimes tatooing is associated with magical belief.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION

Each tribe except the Paharia is divided into a number of exogamous totemic clans. Members of one clan are supposed to

be descended from a common ancestor and no sexual relation between two persons belonging to the same clan is ever tolerated. Most of the villages are now inhabited by members of more than one clan. Members of the same clan bear a common surname which is the name of the totem such as Tirkey, Minz, Soren, Hembrom, Tigga etc. The primary unit of social organisation is the nuclear family consisting of parents and unmarried children. Only in rare cases do we find two or more married brothers living together, while in some cases we find old and infirm dependants being supported by the family. Descent is patrilineal, daughters having no right of inheritance in the property of the father. Residence is patrilocal. Relations of joking exist between a man and his wife's younger brothers and sisters, a woman and her husband's younger brothers and sisters and between grandfathers and grand-children. We also find specific obligations associated with certain groups of kin in respect of certain domestic ceremonies, such as, naming, marriage and death.

Each tribe is endogamous and marriage outside the tribe is a severe taboo. The position of woman in tribal Bihars is not bad. While they do not possess any right to land, they can own movable property like money, goods, cattle, etc. they are in complete charge of the children and move about in the field, forest and the farm without any restriction. Adult and monogamous marriage is the general rule. Widow re-marriage and divorce are allowed, though the latter requires approval of the village panchayat.

The birth of a child is an occasion of great joy for the parents. The house is rendered ritually impure for a certain period which differs from tribe to tribe. At the close of the period the chathi or purification ceremony is performed with feasting and merry-making. The child is usually named after an ancestor, dead or living who becomes his 'mita' or after the name of the day of the week on which the child was born. The formal incorporation of the child into the tribe takes place at his ear-boring ceremony. Whatever early training and discipline tribal children have is given at home by parents. Most tribal children have no formal education in schools. Little boys are allotted work in the family as soon as they are fit for it. They tend goats and look after cattle. Girls collect leaves and twigs from the forest, besides looking after younger children and

helping mother in the kitchen. Children engage in various kinds of games some of which are for boys alone and some for girls. Grown-up children forge ceremonial friendships and blood brotherhoods. No marriage can take place between the families of two ceremonial friends. At the age of adolescence boys and girls have regular training in dance and songs organised in the 'Akhra'. Premarital mixing between the sexes is allowed among the tribals. Very few of such friendships end in marriage because marriage in the same village, even though the parties belong to different clans is not regarded with favour.

The importance of marriage is realised by all tribals. Without marriage no person can become a full member of the tribe. Even most of the deities are reported to have consorts. Adult marriage is the rule, though in some parts, due to Hindu influence, the age of marriage has gone down. In the choice of the mate the boy and girl have a free hand, but a marriage arranged by parents is considered to be ideal. Marriage by capture is now rare. 'Raji-Khushi' marriage is one in which the boy and girl take the initiative. Bride price is not insisted upon in this marriage. Sometimes, a disappointed woman may intrude into the house of her beloved and refuse to go away. Poor people who have no money to pay as bride-price have to serve the girl's father for a certain period. Widow remarriage or the marriage of a divorced woman is called 'Sagai' and only half bride-price is chargeable. The most prevalent form of marriage called 'Diku-Andi' is a poor imitation of lower-class Hindu marriage. Marriage is arranged by go-betweens. The rate of bride-price is different among various tribes. Among the Munda Rs. 12/- and two heads of cattle is the traditional bride-price. Among the Ho it has risen so high that several girls do not find husbands who can pay such high bride-price. On the day fixed for marriage a small party consisting of the boy's male and female relatives and friends goes to the girl's village where elaborate ceremonies together with much eating and drinking of rice beer follow. The girl is brought to her husband's house where she is ceremonially adopted into her husband's clan. The bride visits her parents off and on. Parent's home is her ultimate refuse in case of quarrel with her husband or that of widowhood. Marriage creates a fresh network of relationships for both man and woman, but the latter has to adjust herself in the husband's family. Lack of adjustment leads to partition in the home and

break-up of the family. Divorce is allowed to both parties on grounds of infidelity, theft, witchcraft etc. As it may lead to returning the bride-price, the approval of the village for divorce is necessary.

The place of elders in tribal life is high. They are considered repositories of tribal tradition and experience. In village affairs their voice is important, specially in the Panchayat. But people who are senile have no status whatsoever. They eke out a miserable existence toiling with their failing powers. Even though neglected, old men and women spend most of their time in looking after their grand-children in which task they derive great happiness and satisfaction. Old men feel out of tune with changing society and comment adversely upon the ways of youth. Only during festivals they lose all reserve and indulge freely in the dances, enjoyment and merry-making that mark those occasions.

Old age is itself an ailment. Sometimes herbal remedies are administered in case of illness, at others the 'ojha' or 'mati' is called to diagnose and prescribe the remedy. On death the body is burnt, if the deceased is a man of means, otherwise, it is buried. Death puts the entire family in a state of pollution. An important ceremony is that for calling back the 'shade' of the dead man to reside in the 'Ading' with other ancestral spirits. Once every year the bone-burial ceremony is held to inter the relics of the dead man in his clan 'sasan'.

RELIGION AND FESTIVALS

All the major tribes of Bihar with the exception of the Paharia believe in one 'Supreme Being' who is the creator of the entire universe consisting of supernatural beings, human beings, animals and plants. He is an all pervading and benevolent power. All other gods and spirits owe allegiance to Him. But He is so high, so aloof from the human sphere of action that no worship is offered to Him nor is there an image which represents Him. He is known as the 'Sing Bonga' among the Munda, Birhor and Ho, 'Ponomosor' or 'Bhagwan' among the Kharia, 'Dharmas' among the Oraon and 'Chando' or 'Thakur' among the Santal.

The second class of deities are village deities, both benevolent and malevolent who are worshipped by the village priest

in the 'Sarna' on behalf of the entire village on certain specified occasions. Disease deities are propitiated, when epidemics break out. The name of such deities as well as their number vary from tribe to tribe. Besides these, there are spirits which reside in mountains, rivers, forests and trees. All these deities are repositories of 'Bonga' which is an impersonal power like 'mana' at once sacred and dangerous. In some tribal villages we also find the worship of Mahadan, Kali and Lakshmi. Malevolent spirits are appeased by the 'mati' or 'deonwa'. Ancestral spirits who reside in the 'Ading' also get periodical worship. Totemic objects such as certain animals and plants are objects of reverence for particular clans. A tribal will not harm his totem though he does not actually worship it. Worship consists of chanting some formulae by the priest and the sacrifice of fowl, goat or sheep in the name of the deity. The offering is transformed into sacrament which is partaken by the entire community.

The religious enthusiasm of tribal people is expressed in a number of festivals which mark different stages of the agricultural calendar. The most important festivals are 'Sarhul', 'Naukhia-Parab', 'Karma', 'Tusu', 'Sohorai' etc. 'Sarhul' is one of the most popular festivals in Chotanagpur and is observed on the last day of the month of Baisakh. It is the spring or flower-festival of the aboriginals. On this occasion the village priest offers flowers and sacrifices cock, goat ir sheep in the 'Sarna'. It is a time of great festivity and enjoyment. Men and women spend the night in singing and dancing to the accompaniment of drums. The 'Naukhia-Parab' is held on the last day of the month of 'Ararh', when the first fruits of new crops are offered to the presiding deity of the village. The 'Karma' festival is observed by both aboriginals and non-aboriginals in slightly differing forms. In the month of Bhadra a branch of the sal tree is planted on the 'Akhra' and offerings are made to it. It is preceded by twenty-four hours fasting and the night is spent in dancing and singing in the 'Akhra'. The long legend of Karma and Dharma is narrated in songs. 'Sohorai' is celebrated on the day following Diwali. It is an occasion for the worship of domestic animals, who are cleaned and decorated. In areas of contact tribals celebrate Holi and Dussehra with great enthusiasm and big fairs are held on these occasions. Among the Hos the 'Maga Parab' which lasts for several days is an occasion

Oraon youth carrying Sal sapling from the forest to the village for the Karma Festival.

for great festivity and enjoyment. In Munda areas just after harvest in December and January a number of fairs are held at several places known as 'Buru' which take the form of big markets where business may be combined with entertainment. The most famous 'Buru' is the 'Sukan Buru'. Among the Santals, 'Sohorai' is celebrated after the rice harvest in December-January. The festivals last for five days. The gods of the cattle shed and ancestral spirits are worshipped. During these festivals the tribals give themselves up to dancing, eating, drinking which make their cup of enjoyment full. All the tribals have a rich store-house of songs and dances for different occasions. Even if one does not follow their meaning, they are so lovely and sweet that they have a haunting charm of their own.

SOCIAL CONTROL

Like all communities the tribals of Bihar employ various devices to maintain social equilibrium. From early youth the tribal listens to myths and folk-lore, he learns to distinguish between right and wrong. If he does not conform to the ideal pattern of behaviour, various sanctions differing in nature and degree operate against him. Breach of certain taboos brings in its wake automatic supernatural punishment. Public opinion is a great force for social conformity. Sometimes public disapproval is so great that it takes the form of social boycott and the offender may in extreme cases resort to suicide. The most important social offences which come within the purview of tribal panchayats are the breach of the law of clan exogamy and tribal endogamy. Cases of divorce, adultery, assault, injury and deliberate destruction of property are also dealt with by the same body. Partition of family property and disputes about succession are decided upon by village Panchayat.

Theoretically, the village panchayat consists of all the adult in the village, but in practice only village elders and officers such as headman, the priest, the 'Bhandari' and the 'Gorait' as well as some other men of influence attend. The complainant and the defendants make statements on oath taking a small quantity of paddy, cowdung and a clod of earth. These are placed on his head. False statements, it is belived, will result in loss of crops, cattle and land. Trial by ordeal is now rare. Witnesses are also called. The judgment delivered by the headman reflects the considered opinion of the Panchayat

and has tremendous force which no one dares to disobey. The punishments imposed are fines and ex-communication. A man refusing to pay the fine is boycotted by the whole village. Temporary ex-communication may also be decreed by the Panchayat for light offences. Among the Santal the extreme form of social punishment is called 'Bitlaha' which is pronounced for breach of clan exogamy or marriage or sexual relationship with a non-Santal. News is sent round in the neighbourhood and on the appointed day people gather in hundreds and thousands. The crowd then proceeds to the offender's house singing obscene songs ridiculing the guilty parties, and the house of the culprit is desecrated by the crowd. The 'Bitlaha' follows the sentence of ex-communication by the Panchayat. It is the social expression of the extreme disapproval of the community as a whole.

Among some of the tribes several villages were united into 'Parha.' Each Parha Panchayat had a number of officers modelled on the court of Maharaja of Chotanagpur. The head of the Panchayat was called the 'Raja' or 'Maharaja' and the post was hereditary as also were other officials. The Parha Panchayat heard appeals from the judgments of village Panchayats. This Panchayat met in the village of the accused and representatives came from all villages in the Parha. The procedure was more elaborate than that of the village Panchayat. The court is feasted out of the proceeds of the fine levied on the accused and the court fee charged from the complainant. It is the Parha Pancha who re-admit outcast persons to the tribal fold if they are prepared to mend their ways and pay the requisite fine. The first person to take food at the hands of the newly admitted tribesman is the 'Kartaha'. Restoration to old status is sometimes not complete and the stigma lingers. Among the Ho the re-admitted outcasts form a separate endogamous group 'Kajomesin'.

The Parha system is now almost dead in all areas except a few where under the new-founded inspiration from some converted tribals, it is still an active force. From such areas few cases go to Statutory Panchayats or to courts.

THE CHANGING TRIBAL

Change is fast coming over tribal culture under the impact of certain powerful forces and influences. With the

development of communications and new ideas, new artifacts, machinery etc. are finding their way into remote corners of tribal area. Contact with alien zamindars, courts, money-lenders and petty officers of the state government has also led to a new perspective. Christian missionaries were also responsible for changes in many walks of tribal life. The growth of education and the tribals returning from Assam tea gardens and jute mills of Bengal and from coal mines and steel factories have accelerated the process of change.

There is no aspect of life that is not touched by change. The social solidarity of the village has been broken. Formerly the emphasis was on co-operation, now people are more individualistic. The authority of the village elders is not so strongly felt as before. Respect for age, tradition, ancient modes and customs is vanishing. Dances in the Akhra have become less popular in Christian areas. The youth dormitory is also now a decaying institution. The influx of money with the establishment of military camps in the heart of the tribal areas during the Second World War and the construction of the D.V.C. projects has resulted in the shift of influence and authority from hereditary social functionaries to the 'new rich'. Easy money brought drunkenness, debauchery and venereal diseases in its wake. The first psychological reaction to these changes was one of keen frustration. Losing faith in his own values and gods, the tribal drifted towards either Christianity or Hinduism. The latter alternative was a gradual process involving no sudden break with his past. The 'Birsa Movement' was originally a result of such conditions. So also was the 'Tana Bhagat Movement' among the Oraons. It was later that these movements took an anti-British character.

The growth of education and continued culture contact has led to the second psychological phase, viz, that in which the tribal rediscovers his own culture. This was marked by a re-awkening of pride in certain aspects of tribal culture. Some tribal dances and institutions have received new appraisal. These dances have won for Bihar the first prize in 'All-India competitions'. The 'Dhumkuria' as a place of formal instruction is being popularised. The 'Parha' organisation is also being revived into an active force. Advanced sections of the tribal community took part in the fight for freedom.

The material aspect of the life of the Adivasi has undergone great change. The leafy booth and the wicker walls have given place to substantial houses. In most houses we find beds and country-made chairs as also one or two cups and saucers. Umbrellas made of steel frame are replacing their leafy counterparts and lanterns have replaced earthen lamps. Women prefer sparkling ornaments and mill-made jumpers. In the industrialized areas soap, hair oils, 'alta' and 'kumkum' have found their way into the houses of rich and poor alike. Shoes are now common and instead of the traditional dress sari, dhoti, shirt and short are becoming popular.

A number of welfare schemes have been launched in the tribal areas. Schools are being opened and dispensaries are being established in large numbers. Communications are improving and irrigation schemes are making more areas cultivable. Efforts are being made to wean those tribals who practice shifting cultivation from this wasteful system. Special schemes are being worked in Paharia, Asur and Kharia areas. The opening of Community Projects and N.E.S. blocks has opened up a new horizon for the tribal and the face of village in such areas is changing fast.

Tribal culture in Bihar by its colourfulness and distinctiveness, enhances the beauty of the mosaic of Indian culture as a whole.

Tribal profiles.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE TRIBAL VILLAGE IN BIHAR

The distinguishing features of the tribal village in Bihar are the manifestations of certain tribal institutions which are not found in the Hindu village. These are the 'akhra' or the dancing ground, the 'sasan' or the bone-burial ground, the 'sarna' or the sacred grove and the youth dormitory. But Hill Kharia, Birhor and Sauria Paharia villages fall out from this general pattern and lack one or more of these institutions.

A place of great social importance is the village akhra. The Birhor, Hill Kharia and Paharia though they also dance in groups, have no fixed place of dancing. But among the Munda, Santal, Ho and the Oraon a large open space is situated in the middle of the village or on its outskirts and is set apart for village dancing. If it is close to the headman's house, it may also be used as a place for the meeting of the village panchayat. It is kept clean for the dances of the unmarried youth of the village. Dances take place ordinarily in the evening and after the day's work they afford agreeable entertainment for the villagers.

Two other places of institutional importance in village life are the sasan and the youth dormitory. The sasan is important among the Munda and Ho. It is the bone burial ground of the descendants of the original settlers of the village and is situated on one side of the village site. In those villages which are settled by members of more than one clan, each clan has its sasan and they are found on all sides of the village. Some families have private bone burial grounds close to their houses. As a rule, the bones of a Munda dying away from his Bhuinhari village will be taken to the sasan of his original village by his relatives and this obligation is regarded as a pious duty. But if a non-Bhuinhari family has lived in the village for several generations and is treated for matrimonial purposes as belonging to one of the clans of the village the bones of its members may be interred in the sasan of one of the village clans. Villagers who are neither Bhuinhars nor

residents of long standing are buried in a separate burial ground known as the 'masara.' But even those alien families which have been accorded the privilege of being interred in the sasan may not have a sasandiri erected to their memory. Thus even death does not blur the social distinction between the descendants of the village founders and later arrivals. If this distinction was not made the heirs of the latter could claim Khuntkatti status and corresponding rights in the village. As Roy has described it : 'The Mundas very properly regard these sasandiris as the title deeds of the Khuntkattidars of the village"[1].

The sasan consists of a number of big stone slabs lying flat on the grounds or supported by small pieces of stone at the corners. Under one or more of these stone slabs, called sasandiri lie buried the bones of the deceased members of each family of the original settlers of the village. If the family of the deceased is poor or if the deceased be a mere child and if there is already a stone slab under which the bones of his father or other predeceased members of his family have been buried the earthen vessel containing the bones of the deceased is deposited underneath the old stone slab, otherwise a new sasandiri is placed in the sasan for the deceased. The bones are deposited every year after the harvesting of the winter rice. This is called the 'Jang-topa ceremony.' The erection of large stone slabs in the sasan necessitates certain amount of co-operation within the organisation of the village community. The size of the stone depends on the status of the deceased but in modern times the co-operation among villagers belonging to most tribes has diminished. Majumdar has noted how among the Ho this fact has affected the size of the stone slab[2]. Now-a-days there is a tendency to use the oldest slabs and place them over fresh remains. The sasandiri are not in themselves held in awe and respect. Men and women often sit on them and in some slabs a hole has been made to serve as mortar for punding rice. Newly placed stones are periodically oiled and in olden times burial places in which sasandiri were set up were laid out by the Birhor and the Asur[3]. Ho

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1. S. C. Roy: The Mundas and their Country. Ranchi, 1912, P. 388.
2. D. N. Majumdar: The Affairs of a Tribe Lucknow, 1950, p. 44.
3. Hoffmann and Emelen: Encyclopaedia Mundarica, Vol. XIII Pp 3861-70.

thinks that the Munda adopted this form of memorial ritual from the Asur who occupied Chotanagpur plateau before them. He suggests that as the Santal have no such institution, the Munda acquired it after their separation from the Santal. Formerly the Munda cremated all persons who died natural deaths as do the Ho even to this day and like them buried under the sasandiri only a few bones preferably the skull, the rest with the ashes was thrown in a pit beside the funeral pyre and covered up. Under the influence of Christianity cremation is gradually being replaced by burial and there has arisen the need for a separate grave yard, but it is not clear from the evidence at our disposal whether these new burial grounds have completely replaced the bone burial in the sasan.

The bone burial ground among the Oraon is known as 'Kundi'. Ordinarily there is only one kundi for all the Oraon in the village. In this the Bhuinhars bury the bones of their dead. Those later settlers who have given up the practice of taking the bones of their dead to their respective ancestral villages also deposit these in the village kundi. In the kundi each clan has a separate block or a slab of stone near which the bones of its members are buried. These stones are called 'Phulki' stones. In some villages some later settlers have a separate kundi of their own. Those later settlers who still maintain the connection with the pillage of their origin take the bones of their dead in that village. The general practice is that if the ancestral village is too far away people bury the bones of their dead in the common kundi in which they live or establish a separate kundi. Like the Munda practice, the Oraon also perform the bone burial once a year in the 'Harbora' festival.

Among the Munda, Santal, Ho and Oraon there is an elaborate system of village worship centred on the sacred grove where the godlings of the village reside.[1] The grove consists of a cluster of trees which it taboo to cut down.[2] The sacred grove is known as the Sarna among the Munda and Oraon and as 'Jaher' or 'Jahira' among the Ho and the Santal. Two of the tallest trees in the grove standing side by side are deemed to be

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1. The sacred grove among the Munda, Ho and Oraon consists of Sal Sarjom trees among the Santal.

2. This can however be expiated by the offering of sacrifices in the sacred grove.

the seats of 'Marang Baru,' the chief spirit of the Santal and his female consort 'Jaher Burhi' or the lady of the grove. At the foot of the former tree stands the blackened hearth stone on which the village priest cooks his share of the offerings, apart from the sacrificial food prepared for the rest of the villagers. At the time of worship among the Santal, a temporary thatched hut is built there and in this the animals are sacrificed. Nearby is the place where the communal feast for the whole village is cooked. The space at the foot of the principal trees in a Santal grove is carefully tended. Large earthen replicas of elephants and horses are provided for the spirits.

Among all these tribes a number of festivals is celebrated every year. During all these festivals worship at the sacred grove for the propitiation of deities is an important feature. The Pahan or the village priest has special responsibility for the proper upkeep of the sacred grove.

The other important feature of the tribal village in Bihar is the boys' and girls' dormitory. Though it is not found among the Birhor in an institutionalised form, two huts are set aside in every village as the sleeping houses for boys and girls. These are erected by the youth themselves. Among the Paharias separate dormitories used to exist for boys and girls but recent accounts suggest that the decay of the institution is far progressed though it may be that among this tribe the institution was never fully developed.

Except in parts of the Lodma Pargana of the Ranchi district the dormitory of the Munda is not as important as the Oraon 'Dhumkuria'. There are separate houses for boys and girls but their structure is much less elaborate than among the Oraon, though they serve as places where moral and intellectual training is given to the village youth. The dormitory does not play any part in the Ho village. There appears to be no real organisation of the village youth, no officers and no recognised relationship between the boys' and girls' dormitory. There is no training in sex and sexual duties nor are they associated with dancing. It would be seen that among the Ho the youth dormitory should either be regarded as embryonic or in a state of decay. Among the Kharia the dormitories still exist, but there are no rules of admission nor are there grades and offi-

cers. The question of the existence of the dormitory system among the Santal is a matter of deep controversy. Basing his opinion on what Hunter and Peal have said and what he himself saw, Elwin thinks that "among the Santal, though the building has disappeared the traditions of ghotul life continue without." W. G. Archer, however, never found any trace of the dormitory among the Santal and thinks that references to early authorities are misleading. The existence of dancing grounds and of moral censors like the Jog-Manjhi cannot by themselves be taken as evidence of one time existence of the dormitory even of the Oraon type much less the ghotul. Communal dances are an integral part of tribal culture in Bihar and elsewhere, and may exist without the institution of the dormitory. The same can be said about the liberty enjoyed by the sexes before marriage.

The youth dormitory is an important institution in the social life of the village. Known as the Dhumkuria or the Jokherpa, the boys' dormitory is housed in a building standing in a prominent part of the village. In Barambe, a village near Ranchi, may be seen decorated pillars and beams in the dormitory building and the floor is covered by mats presented by the girls of the village. Oraon love for artistic embellishments may be seen amply demonstrated in the dormitory. In front of the dormitory is usually the dancing ground. Certain musical instruments are also kept in the dormitory as well as wooden figures of elephants, horses and fish, crocodile and such semi-sacred objects. "The very fact that these are preserved in the dormitory is the surest sign of the vitality of the institution"[1].

The Dhumkuria is a school of social training from which the tribal youth learns not only the tribal lore but imbibes all the qualities which will make him a useful member of the tribal community. A boy is sent to the Dhumkuria at about eleven or twelve years of age. Once every third year boys are admitted into the Dhumkuria,[2] the older boys in consultation determining which boys of the village they will take over.

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1. V. Elwin: Muria and their Ghotul p. 293.

2. In the village of Koia, Elwin was told that boys were taken into the Dhumkuria every year at the time of the Sarhul festival.

Formerly, elaborate ceremonies were performed to mark the entry of boys to it, but they are not now everywhere observed. During the period of their stay in the dormitory their parents must make contributions of Karanj fruit from which oil is extracted to light the house. The contribution is on a graduated scale according to the means of the parents.

The boys are divided into three age grades, each grade having clearly defined duties. The boys remain in each of the first two grades for a period of three years and continue to live in the Dhumkuria in the third grade till marriage. Cases are, however, known of the membership of the Dhumkuria being relinquished only after the birth of a child. The supervision and control of the Dhumkuria community rests in the hands of a senior boy who is styled its Mahto. He is appointed in consultation with village headman and elders. The Dhangar Mahto instructs the boys in their social and religious duties and with the assistance of the Kotwar maintains discipline, both social and moral, among the youth.

The boys act as a corporate body and help in the preparations for a wedding or any other feast in the village. They act as cooks and look after the comforts of visitors who are generally housed in the dormitory. If a villager is in need of the services of workmen for work in the field or for thatching a house he applies to the dormitory headman who strikes a bargain with him. The wages received by the team of the dormitory youth are generally spent on the purchase of musical instruments for the dormitory. Youngmen also act as messengers for the meeting of the Parha (a group of villages) panchayat. They collect fuel for the fire that keeps the dormitory warm and gather mahua flower from which to distil the liquour which is drunk in the dormitory. The oil presser crushes the karanj fruit free of charges as the distiller distils their mahua gratis. In December every year on a fixed day the boys set out on a ceremonial expedition to catch and drive away birds which injure rice crops. As they pass through the fields they are entitled to gather some rice from the paddy fields. The proceeds of the sale of the rice goes to the funds of the Dhumkuria. In some villages there are mandar-salas or clay menhirs and boys have the additional duty of looking after them. On one fixed day in the year, youths of the dormitory entertain all the village elders to a feast where the latter discuss important

village affairs. Youths play an important role in cementing inter-village alliances of friendship. Members of the Dhumkuria visit other villages in a body and similarly receive youths from other villages on visits. They exchange greetings, feast and dance together and individual boys enter into ceremonial friendship pacts called *sangi* with the dormitory boys of other villages. On the day of their departure, the visitors make a ceremonial farewell and are presented with a flag or some other emblem which is handed over by the headman of the Dhumkuria to the leader of the village dormitory of the other village as a mark of friendship.

The Oraon have a separate dormitory for the girls of the village. This dormitory is not like the Dhumkuria — a public building and its location is not supposed to be known to any but its inmates and to those of the bachelors' dormitory. An elederly male Oraon known as the Pelo Kotwar is apointed by the village elders as the supervisor of the girls. But inside the girls' dormitory the most intelligent senior girl becomes the monitor and is known as Barki Dhangrin. There are three age groups in this dormitory too, and fresh entrants have like those in the Dhumkuria to do all odd jobs for the senior girls. The girls must weave the palm leaf mats used in the Dhumkuria. At weddings and other feasts the services of the girls are solicited. Like the youths the girls also receive customary payments from the bridegroom's party as a reward for their services. During the harvesting season their services are hired out to one who is in need of agricultural labour.

The most important function of the youth dormitory is to train youngmen and women in singing and dancing. These recreations not only satisfy the Oraon's aesthetic sense and need of entertainment, but also help the collective spirit of tribal sentiment and its transmission from generation to generation. Songs and dances appear to be the chief items in the ordinary programme of their evening activities. On summer and winter nights youngmen and women may be seen dancing in the village akhra from evening till midnight. Various styles of singing and dancing are in vogue and it is the duty of the heads of both dormitories to see that their wards are well up to the standard required. Dances for various occasions, seasons and festivals differ in technique. Roy has discovered in the pantomimic representation in the dances a magical significance. "Dances

and songs are believed to bring happiness and prosperity and a stimulation of the helpful forces of nature so that the earth may be fruitful and the Oraon may be blessed with an abundance of animal and vegetable food and the fertility of man and the rest of creation may increase" [1]

We have little information on the relations between boys and girls' dormitory in the village. There is in Bihar nothing like the chelik-motiari friendship as among the Murias of Bastar[2]. Dehon regarded the dormitories as immoral places where promiscuity prevailed[3]. But ancient Oraon custom says that no girl may enter the boys' house and if the rule is broken, boys will temporarily lose their eye sight. In Mandar we gathered that the girl herself would be stricken with blindness. Nevertheless friendships grow up between individual boys and girls and most of the youths have their sweethearts in the girls' dormitory. The recognition of such pairing is general and advances to another's recognised partner are punished with the imposition of a fine. Such Dhumkuria friendships seldom end in marriage because of the prejudice against marriage in the same village.

The dormitories, wherever they exist, help the village elders in their work of training the youth. Boys and girls learn the dignity of labour, shoulder minor responsibilities, and some of them receive training in leadership and organisation. On certain occasions the dormitory acts as a corporate body on behalf of the entire village. But the dormitory has no political pretension and unlike the Naga Morungs[4] it can never become a rival to the village authorities. On the contrary, it supplements the work of the elders. The Dhumkuria does not aspire as does the Muria Ghotul to be a children's republic because on all occasions it is aided by the village leaders and it is endowed with certain magico-religious functions. The dormitory like the 'akhra' with which it is intimately connected, has a great role to play in welding together village youth.

Besides these institutions which are characteristic of most

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1. S. C. Roy: The Oraon, pp. 275—76.
2. V. Elwin : Op cit. P. 295.
3. Dehon P: Religion and Customs of the Oraons. Memoris of the Asiatic society of Bengal. Vol. 1 (1905 - 7)
   Furer-Haimendorf: The Morung system of the Konyak Nagas. J. R. A. S. Vol. LXVIII, 1938.

of the tribal villages, their population pattern reveals a homogeneity that is unique. At some places we find single clan villages which contain no others than descendants of the first settlers. Even in multi-clan villages, villagers are almost equal in status, though the Khuntkattidars or Bhuinhars claim certain privileges over the later settlers or the parja or jeth raiyats. They all share differences of caste and class which divide a non-tribal village in the same area. As the economic status of everybody is the same, there is a feeling of equality and brotherhood all round. Dancing, worship and youth activities being common for the whole village, all its inmates are bound together in a social and mystic unity.

THE TRIBAL VILLAGE AS A SOCIAL UNIT

The tribal village in Bihar is an administrative, economic and ritual unit. But when we come to an analysis of the social forces which turn an aggregation of homesteads into a corporate unit, we are confronted with a great scarcity of data. The descriptions of kinship relations are usually unrelated to territorial and residential groupings and the composition of villages in terms of clan membership, kinship groups and agnatic or cognatic affiliations is not known.

Although now-a-days many villages of Chotanagpur are inhabited by mixed populations consisting of members of several tribes and communities, we are chiefly concerned with the tribal village *i.e.* the homogenous settlement inhabited by members of one single tribe. Yet among some tribes such as the Oraons, there are very few villages which to-day correspond to this description, for the Oraons consider it derogatory to engage in such occupations as weaving, basketry, wicker work, pottery, etc. So in Oraon villages we find one or two families of Ahirs, Ghasis,[1] Goraits,[2] Jolahas and Mahalis. All these little communities regard the Oraons of the village as occupying a higher social status than themselves. They have been fitted into the functional framework of the village because they do certain specialized tasks for the dominant community. In Munda, Santal and Ho villages there are besides these castes the Hindu castes of carpenters and blacksmiths. There they enjoy the same status as the other castes do in the Oraon village.

All the tribes of Bihar except the Paharias are organized in clans, but to-day very few villages are inhabited by a single

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1. They cut grass, tend horses and act as musicians at village festivals. Col. Dalton speaks of them as "an extra-ordinary tribe, foul parasites of Central Indian hill tribes." Women act as midwives or nurses. See Rusell and Hiralal, Tribes and Castes of Central Provinces. Vol. III, p. 27.

2. A Hinduized aboriginai caste who carry messages, act as drummers, make combs, card cotton. Their women do the work of tatooers. In some villages the Gorait family holds *Goraiti khet* (service lands).

clan. D. N. Majumdar found a few one-clan villages among the Ho in Kolhan and one-clan villages were noticed by S. C. Roy in the Bhuinhari pattis of the Munda in the Ranchi district. But on the whole, it may be said that the village unit in Bihar does not correspond to the clan unit and that the former is composed of several clans. Even the Birhor settlement called the Tanda is not exclusively inhabited by one clan, but consists of families brought together by chance or linked by matrimonial relationships. The cohesion of families living in a Tanda is stronger than the cohesion of clansmen living in different Tanda, but neither tie is so strong as to prevent a family from leaving one Tanda and joining another. We have no information, however, as to how an immigrant family settle in a new Tanda. Among the Hill Kharia who are almost on the same cultural level as the Birhor, the settlements are inhabited by agnatic families. Only in very few cases do we find certain affinal kin notably sons-in-law settled in a village, but among the Hill Kharias it is as easy for a family to sever its connections with one village and join another as it is among the Birhor.

Among the Munda and the Oraons, villages generally consist of more than one clan. The same may be said of Ho, Kharia and Santal villages, but only among the Munda and the Oraon the tribal community in the village is divided into two groups. One group consists of the Khuntkattidars or the descendants of the original settlers of the village who generally belong to one clan and the other comprises later settlers. In most cases the majority of the second group consists of the cognatic relations of the Khuntkattidars. They are known as the Parja and they pay rent for their land to the Khuntkattidars. They are not considered socially inferior to the Khuntkattidars and are admitted to all social, religious, and economic activities of the village. But on the whole it is said that the clan of the original settlers is the dominant clan in the village and most of the officers like the Munda and the Pahan are recruited from it. In this dominant clan there are two lineages, the Munda Khunt and the Pahan Khunt and from these the village officers are usually drawn. These two lineages are more or less equally important and enjoy greater prestige than the rest of the village community.

While in other tribes there is no social stratification in

respect of clans, among the Dudh and Dhelki Kharias two clans viz. Muru and Samad are considered of superior social status. This is expressed not only in common parlance, but also in the fact that in inter-village tribal gatherings a man of Muru clan is always chosen to preside. At births, deaths and marriages and at ceremonies performed to readmit an excommunicated person to the tribal fold, men of the Muru clan are accorded the rank of 'pan-diha' or water giver and men of the Samad clan act as 'Bhandari' or the steward.

Clan exogamy is an important feature of the social organization of tribal society. In villages consisting of members of one clan which are rare village exogamy results from the exogamy of the clan. In the beginning the number of clans in each village was much smaller than it is to-day. As the population increased many a clan became unwieldy and split into several segments which in course of time assumed the status of distinct clans. S. C. Roy is of the opinion that such subdivisions were probably affected to avoid the necessity of members of one clan having to travel a long way into the domain of another clan to seek wives for their sons or husbands for their daughters. In villages comprising members of different clans, marriage within the village is not forbidden in express terms by the tribal code as long as the rules of clan exogamy are observed, but there is among most tribes a distinct prejudice against marriage between parties belonging to the same village, but we have no material to assess the strength of this sentiment in favour of village exogamy.

Kinship determines social relations between members of the same clan living in a village and also between affinal relations living in the same village. But kinship ties are not the only social ties that bind together the village population. There is a feeling of solidarity among families settled in the same village for several generations. During village festivals or on occasions of public worship and in the institution of the youth dormitory in some villages, the social unity of the village is amply demonstrated. The whole population of the village takes part in the festivals and ceremonials which are performed on behalf of all the villagers by the village officers. The youth dormitory where it exists co-ordinates the work of the youth not only for their own good but also for the benefit of the village at large.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF A CHOTANAGPUR VILLAGE

INTRODUCTION

Village communities all over India present certain common features. The structural unity of the village is quite distinct from the larger unities of kin, caste and class. It has, at the same time, a significant role in the processes of socialisation and social control. Each village is an independent entity, with special *mores* and traditions and characterized by a unique corporate unity. The different castes and communities living in the village are knit together in an economic, social and cultural pattern based on mutual obligations, common customs and a common past. Economic, social and cultural co-operation between the different communities is the most striking characteristic of village life. Inspite of factions which how their ugly face now and then in village affairs, the inhabitants of a village present a united front before outsiders.

All these features are found in 'Anigara,' a village situated a mile off the Ranchi-Jamshedpur Road, three miles from the sub-divisional town of Khunti. Preliminary investigations in the village by the present author bring out two facts very clearly. Firstly, Anigara is a well defined structural unity, though composed of several castes and communities. Loyalty to the village provides a strong basis of solidarity amongst its inhabitants. Secondly, this village is not much different from other non-tribal villages in this area and is thus a part of the Chotanagpur rural community rather than a fresh type in itself.

Tribes and Castes

Anigara like other villages in this area is a mixed village. Of its 57 families as many as 34 were counted as Mundas of different clans, 12 were listed as Pardhans, 3 as Lohra, 3 as Teli, 2 as Rajput and 1 each as Oraon, Ahir and Hajam. Of these two most influential communities are the Munda due to their numerical preponderance and the Teli due to their wealth, status as zamindars and better education. The village has three

toli or wards. The Munda Toli is inhabited by Mundas of the Munda lineage of the Purti clan as well as Mundas of other clans. In the Pahan Toli besides the Mundas of the Pahan lineage of the Purti clan, Ahir, Hajam, Lohar and Oraon families are found. In the Pardhan Toli we have the Pardhans and the Teli.

1. *Munda*

There are thirty-four families of Mundas in the village. They hail from different clans such as Purti, Bhengra, Bodra, and Hasa Nag. Purti clan is the predominant clan in the village as it claims nearly thirty families and the Munda (the headman) and the Pahan (village priest) belong to this clan. The families belonging to the other clans are traditionally lower in social status than the original settlers of the village i.e. members of the Purti clan. These other families were settled in the village by the dominant clan which gave them lands and for which they paid rent. Now this distinction is giving way except in the matter of the selection of the Munda and the Pahan who must belong to the Purti clan. But as the selection is generally based on heredity this is not very much minded by others. Though belonging to the same clan, the families are divided into two lineages, the Munda lineage and the Pahan lineage, each of which lives in separate blocks in the village. Their bone burial ground which in nearby villages is at one place is strangely enough on two sides of village street in the middle of the village. Generally, this bone burial ground is on the outskirts of a village. This might be a relic of the sharp cleavage which occurred in the Munda and Pahan lineages of the dominant clan in each village when there was a struggle for supremacy between the Munda and the Pahan in most of the Munda villages. The Munda live generally in nuclear families though in Anigara there are several cases of brothers living together with their families or a son keeping his aged parents with himself or a brother supporting his widowed sister. The average size of the family works out at five individuals each. Another remarkable feature is that the number of children comes to only 2.3 per family. The Munda strictly obey the rule of clan exogamy. But in addition to that there are forces working for village exogamy too and no case of intra-village

marriage was discovered by me. Mahtha Munda an old man of over sixty gave me the following reasons for village exogamy :

1. All people in the village are regarded as brothers and sisters. No sexual relationship was, therefore, possible between them. The taboo was necessary to maintain the solidarity of the village. Free movement of men and women in the village could only be possible when all the girls of the village are frozen for the boys of the village.
2. Harsh treatment to errant women cannot be meted out if the woman had her parents in the same village. In that case the whole village would be divided into two fighting camps.
3. It would be easy for sulking wives to run away to their parents' house on flimsy pretexts. It would be at the same time difficult to get them back.
4. One can always expect co-operation and support from co-villagers. It is better to extend the circle of kinship so that in times of quarrel with outsiders one may have the maximum number of supporters.

Thus village exogamy forces people to marry outside the village. The Munda however have a tendency to marry in the immediate neighbourhood and the average range of marriage is 4 miles ; the minimum being $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile and the maximum 16 miles. In this way Mundas of the village have forged kinship ties with almost all villages round about and are sure of receiving hospitality when they reach a village in which a son or daughter of their village is married. Women after marriage continue relations with their family and village of orientation as in the event of widowhood or divorce, the parents' house is the only refuge for such a woman.

All the Munda families possess land, good, bad or indifferent. Except for a few families most Munda families do not possess enough land for their subsistance and have perforce to engage on some subsidiary occupation such as making combs, fishing nets and implements and engaging in carpenter's work. Some of them do some petty trading. They buy rice, goats, fowls etc. from one market and sell it after a few days in a neighbouring market with a small margin of profit. Twelve

persons left their homes recently for Assam to work in the tea gardens there. one family has left for Tatanagar to work as labourers in the steel factory there.

The Mundas always maintain good relationship with other communities of the village. There are a number of unities binding them together.

2. *Pardhan*

There are thirteen households belonging to this caste. Their traditional occupation is the preparation of *chura* or flattened rice and selling it in the market. Each family, however, has some Don land ranging from one acre to five acres. They have more Tanr land. The yield from their fields does not give them even a subsistance income. But none of them goes to Khunti for work as work is easily available in the village itself. They provide most of the agricultural labour in the village. Their daily wages come to 75 paise per day per head. They may take it either in cash or kind. They have small families. Only one family consists of 10 members, five of six members, three of five members, two of four members, one each of two and one member. In three cases two married brothers are living together ; in one a father lives with his son's family while nine other families are nuclear families consisting only of parents and unmarried children. They are comparatively backward as none of their children go to school which is in the village itself. One of them Manglu went to Assam with his wife and two children leaving his lands in the charge of Jagat Pradhan. He had a series of misfortunes recently as he lost two of his children one after the other. He thought it better to leave the village altogether. No one knows when he will return. The Pardhans have exogamous clans. Members of only three clans viz. Samdhiar, Bania and Ghasia live in the village. The names of other clans as many as I could gather were Turuar and Hathia.

3. *Teli*

This caste is represented by three families two of which bear the surname of Gonjhu and one that of Mahto. The ancestors of the present families purchased proprietary rights in the village in 1903 from a Brahman owner through a Bank.

The village fell to Gopinath, the youngest of the five brothers of the purchaser, when partition took place among his sons in 1909. Gopinath lived here alone till 1922, when he brought his family from his original home Dahutu, a village adjacent to Khunti. Now, there are four nuclear families of which two live together and one lives at Chaibasa where one of the brothers is serving as a Police Inspector. The third family was settled in the village by Dinanath Gonjhu. The head of this family Aghna Mahto is the mother's sister's son of Dinanath. Though the first four families live in two houses adjacent to each other there has been no partition of property. They have altogether Zamindari worth Rs. 300/- per annum, possess 19acres Don land and 70 acres Tanr land from which 17 acres have been given in the Bhoodan or land gift movement. Aghna Mahto pays rent to the family and holds 3 acres of Don land and much more Tanr land. It is not possible for him to make his both ends meet with the produce of the field and he engages in petty trading in the local market places. His eldest son and two daughters do not go to school. His youngest son reads in class III of the local middle school. This family is looked down upon by the other two Teli families as it is poor and looks up to the zamindars for support and patronage.

In the zamindar's family the two sons of Lakshminath and their families are more advanced than the families of Dinanath and Dhananjay, sons of Gaurinath, the elder son of Gopinath who first came to settle in the village. Pashupati the elder son of Lakshminath is somewhat educated and works as a lawyer's clerk in Khunti which gives him an income of nearly Rs. 125/- per month. His eldest son reads in Patna Medical College and second son reads in the matriculation class of the Khunti High School. All his other school-age children including girls are reading in the Anigara Middle School. Trilokinath, the younger brother of Pashupati is Inspector of Police in Chaibasa drawing nearly Rs. 300/- a month. His school-age daughters are reading in Chaibasa School. The children of Dinanath and his brother Dhananjay also go to school. They live in the village itself.

The range of marriage in all the Teli families in the village is very limited. From 11 marriages that took place in three generations only in 2 marriages they went afar in search of mates going even beyond Ranchi to Ormanjhi (39 miles from

Anigara) and Randhwa (on the Ranchi Lohardaga Road). Another marriage took place in a village eight miles from Anigara while the rest of the eight marriages were arranged within a radius of 5 miles from the village. All the three families belong to the Kashyap gotra which is the only gotra found nearabout. But gotra among them is not an exogamous unit. The only marriage restriction is on relations five generations in the father's line and three in the mother's line.

4. LOHAR AND LOHRA

There are three families belonging to this community. Two of them are classed as Munda Lohar. They originally belonged to Munda fold but are said to have eaten food at the hands of Lohra which is the defiling caste as they eat the meat of dead animals. From that time they formed a separate group. Now-a-days not even Mundas take water from their hands. Another family belongs to the Sad Lohar group. While there is no eating restriction between these two groups any marriage relation is strictly forbidden and unthinkable. Their chief function is sharpening the plough-shares of the ploughs. For each plough the Lohar is paid 1. Kat 4 Paila Don paddy in Aghan, 3 Pailas Gondli in August and 3 Pailas of Gora paddy grown on Tanr lands. Besides this the Lohars make spades, rakes, hasua and ploughshares which they sell to villagers on payment of cash price or in the *hats* in the neighbourhood. Each family has some land but they do not care much for agriculture as their own profession is quite paying and they move from village to village selling their manufactures. Their income is considerable but they are improvident and spend a lot on liquor.

5. RAJPUTS

There are three families of Rajputs in the village. These do not enjoy the same caste status as Rajputs in other parts of the country, as they are of mixed descent being born of liaisons between Kshatriyas and tribals. They marry among families of similar status. Rajputs of other areas do not even take water at their hands. They are tenants of the Teli zamindars and do not enjoy any influence or prestige corresponding to their castes in other parts. Between three families there are only

six individuals. Ram Singh's family consists of husband, wife and two children while Raghu Nath Singh is alone in his family. He came back from Assam where he had gone to work in the tea gardens with his mother and brother only six months ago, reclaimed his land from the landlord by paying off arrears of rent. He has 29 acres of lands (7 acres Don and the rest Tanr). The third family also consists of one person Charan Singh who is the brother-in-law (sister's husband) of the owners, Koka Singh and Charan Singh who are also in Assam. Charan Singh looks after the property. These Rajputs have no objection in taking food at the hands of the Munda or any other caste except the Lohras.

6. ORAON

There is only one representative of the community in this village. He is alone in his family and his lands are scanty. When not engaged on his own work, he works as a labourer in some one else's field.

7. AHIR

There is only one family belonging to this caste. The head of the family is Bechan Mahto. He does not tend the cattle of any family in the village. He has three acres of Don land which suffices for the couple and two children.

8. HAJAM

There is only one family belonging to this caste. He was brought here from Mahil, a village 4 miles away by the local Teli zamindars a couple of years ago. There is another family living in a hamlet half a mile from Anigara but that barber was not at all skilful in his art. The head of the family is Rore Hajam who was given land for building a house. He performs barber's duties in all the households of the village including that of the tribals. From every house he gets 20 pailas of paddy at the harvest time in Aghaan. I return for this he shaves all adults in the family twice a week and gives a hair cut once a month. The rate of payment is not according to the number of adults per household. Some households make the customary payment even if no work is taken from the barber. Rore Hajam maintains a cycle and attends the nearby markets

within a radius of 5 miles. The markets keep him busy in afternoons on four days a week. His average earning in a market is from Rs. 2/- to Rs. 2.50 per day. Besides this he and his wife have to attend in all ceremonies connected with births, marriage and deaths in all the households, non-tribal and tribal. For these services he gets his customary perquisites or *neg* after the ceremonies are performed.

B. SOCIAL HIERARCHY

The village community is socially stratified. The Munda, Teli, Rajput, Hajam, Ahir and Oraon as well as the Pardhan can take water from each other's hands. From the hands of the Lohra no caste is willing to take even water. Rice cooked in a metal pot eludes pollution and may be taken at the hands of persons from whom water can be taken. But rice cooked in earthen ware cannot be taken except by the members of the same family. *Roti* or baked bread which is elsewhere regarded as *Kacha* food is here regarded as *pucca* food and can be taken at the hands of any body except a Lohra. A Pardhan who invites other caste peoples at his place on some festive occasion would set apart grain for each family of invitee rather than serve them cooked food.

The Mundas and the clean castes are regarded as on par in social hierarchy. Among the Hindu castes the Teli enjoys superior position than the Rajput as the latter are of mixed descent.

Mundas of the Purti clan	Teli Rajput Ahir & Hajam Oraon
Mundas of other clans	
PARDHAN	
LOHAR	

C. THE UNITIES

Social Unity

Anigara is a perfect social unity. The fact of village exogamy which is a rule not only for the Mundas but for all castes makes it so. Its *Akhra* or the dancing ground is the place

where all the communities participate in communal dancing and singing songs in Mundari as well as *Ganwari*. All the communities are united by a fraternal feeling and members of one community are seen using kinship terms for members of a different community according to age. Whenever any dispute occurs it is placed first before the elders of the village who form a fluid unofficial panchayat. This panchayat settles disputes not only among members of a particular community but even between members of different communities. This panchayat also fixes the days of the various festivals.

Ritual Unity

The ritual unity of the village is amply demonstrated on the occasion of festivals and other religious observances. In Anigara there is a Pahan who looks after the relations between the villagers and supernatural and offers worship and sacrifice at the village Sarna or the sacred grove. For meeting the cost of the sacrifice and the rituals a small plot of land called Dalikatari or Pahanai service land is set apart for him. This is indivisable and is transmitted from one Pahan to the next. It is rent free though the Pahan has to pay a petty amount as road cess. It is the function of the Pahan to worship the *Hatu* Bongako (village deities) who are three in number viz. Desauli, Jaher Buri and Chandi Bonga. These gods are guardians of the village and their help is sought in hunting and in agricultural pursuits.

In the festivals the entire village irrespective of tribe or caste considerations becomes a solid whole and people vie with each other in merriment and revelry. The Mage Parab is celebrated in December-January. It is at this festival that all servants engaged in different households are relieved from duty and given an opportunity to visit their relatives. After a fortnight they are reappointed. The Phagu festival coincides with the Holi of the Hindus. The Mundas give no account of the origin of the festival. Evidently it is a case of Sanskritization. Besides the Hindus of the village, the tribals sprinkle coloured water over their friends and neighbours through bamboo syringes. Yellow dye is manufactured by boiling Palas flowers with lime. The Pahan cuts a sapling which is burnt on the Holi eve. He also sacrifices a yellow foul. Next day coloured water and Abir are freely thrown on each other's person. In the

evening a gala dance is organised in which all persons of different communities take part, some as dancers, the others as spectators. Herein we find what McKim Marriott calls the mingling of the Great tradition and the Little tradition.

The Sarhul or the Ba Parab is celebrated with great eclat in the village in the month of April. It is the flower festival and celebrations go on for several days. The Pahan worships the village deities on behalf of the entire village. The happiness and joy is shared by all communities. It is taboo for all villagers to plough the fields on the day of Sarhul and the preceding it.

The Karam festival is celebrated in the month of Bhado (August-September). It is one of the major Munda festivals. Here also there is a mingling of the Great tradition and the Little one as it is not only celebrated by Mundas but also in other Hindu households in Chotanagpur and other parts of South Bihar. The details of observances are different to some extent and it is difficult to say as to who borrowed the Karma festival and from whom. It is a two-day festival of religious activity and dancing round the Karam sapling brought from the jungle and planted in the village Akhra or dancing ground.

The Jom Nava celebrated in the month of August-September is analogous to the eating of the first fruits. It signifies the ripening of paddy. The Batauli festival is celebrated before the re-ploughing and levelling operations begin in August. It is forbidden to weed or to re-plough the land before this festival and this taboo is observed by all.

The Dasahra festival is celebrated in Anigara by all the communities. Though not a festival of the Mundas they contribute a goat towards sacrifice by their brethren. Most of them go to see the Dasahra Mela in Khunti town. Dancing goes on in the Akhra on this occasion too for two days. The Sohrai festival celebrated in honour of domesticated animal is held on the morrow of the Divali festival. On the Divali night all the homes in the village are illuminated. On the next day all communities join in cattle worship. For seven days before this festival cattle are not harnessed for work. Visiting Anigara a couple of days before Sohrai one is astonished to see the love and tenderness of people for their cattle. They are washed, cleaned and anointed with oil. Their sheds are also cleaned and Gorea Bonga is worshipped by each family individually.

The worship being over garland is hung in the necks of cattle and their horns, foreheads and other parts of the body are decorated. One thinks he has come to a cattle complex and is reminded of the tenderness which the Muer feel for their cattle.

Recently, Mundas have come to join the Ramnavami festival. It is celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of Ramchandra. More frequently it is given the form of Mahabiri Jhanda when the flag of Lord Mahavira is taken in a procession. Mundas contribute some money for the celebration. They are given the *prasad* or the consecrated food at the end of the worship.

Since the establishment of the Middle School in the village Saraswati Puja is celebrated towards the end of January. Subscriptions are raised by boys of the School and a Brahman comes from the neighbouring village of Hasa for performing the worship. *Prasad* is distributed to all present at the *Puja.*

Thus in whatever festival there is in the village all the inhabitants join. Outsiders are welcome because most of the festivals are held on different days in different villages to enable people to enjoy the festivals from one village to another.

An important instrument of ritual unity and uniformity is the barber and his wife who officiate at all life crisis ceremonies in the families of not only the Hindus but also of the Mundas. Sagar Pahan told the author that the barber was indispensable in all ceremonies.

Economic Unity

The village is an economic unit as most of its inhabitants are united by common interests in the village. Landlord rights are excercised by the Munda or by the Teli. All others are tenants. I was told that landlord-tenant relationship was most amicable in the village and no rent suit has been filed against any defaulting tenant. It was also claimed that no inhabitant of the village went to Khunti or to any nearby village in search of employment. Those people who needed work could get it in the village itself. The village is still self sufficient to a large extent and the few things they have to get from outside are obtained from the nearby markets or *hats,* to which all the villagers, young or old, male or female occasionally go. Agriculture is the most important occupation but no agricultural

operation is now performed with the village as one unit. Hunting has been reduced to a ceremonial and the village acts as a unit in the hunting expeditions.

Political Unity

The village is a distinct political unit as its boundaries are well marked and wellknown. From early times it had a common headman and a common sacrificer who belonged to the same Munda clan. They still continue to enjoy prestige in the village. Elders of all the communities form an informal panchayat which discusses all matters concerning the village and settles disputes. Recently the government sponsored panchayat has been established comprising Anigara, Neya, Pokla, Baritola, Kundi, and Charit. Few cases have gone up to the courts outside or even to the govt. sponsored Gram-Panchayat court. Only one case went to the S.D.O. at Khunti. The ownership of a tree was disputed between a Teli family and a Lohra family and the panchayat feared miscarriage of justice. No decision has been given in the case yet. The importance of the village has increased as Anigara is the headquarters of the Panchayat which holds its meetings in the local Middle School. The Mukhia or the headman of the Panchayat is Pashupati, the local Teli landlord. The Munda and the Pahan have also been elected as members of the Panchayat. Two other Mundar and One Pardhan also represent the village on the Panchayat.

D. CONCLUSIONS

Anigara is a mixed village in Chotanagpur inhabited by 8 communities. By far the largest community is the Munda. Besides the Munda there are the Pardhan, Teli, Rajput, Lohra, Ahir, Hajam and Oraon. All these communities live together in a well-knit society. The social groups have lived together in peace for several generations because there is a feeling of live and let live and some of the communities like the Pardhan, Lohra and Hajam fulfil important economic functions which are not competitive but complimentary.

It is true that all the communities do not enjoy the same social status and there is something like a rough social hierarachy. But this should not blind us to the social, ritual, economic and political ties which bind the village into a distinct entity.

Village exogamy and the application of artificial kinship terms for neighbours belonging to different communities are important pointers to the social solidarity of the village. The cooperation of all the village in the various festivals and ceremonies make the village a ritual unit. All the villagers suffer if any calamity like an epidemic or drought visits the village whereas all rejoice if there is a bumper crop or some member of the village community is favoured by fortune.

The composition of the village does not differ from that of non-tribal village in the same area as the latter is also composed of diverse castes and communities differing in social status. There is a lot of differentiation of wealth in Anigara as in any other non-tribal village. The material culture and the agricultural technique of the people of Anigara is also not in any way inferior to that of the non-tribal village of the same area. The personalized relationship is a common feature of both the villages. Thus generally speaking the village of Anigara is part of the rural complex of Chotanagpur Plateau.

CLASS AND CASTE IN TRIBAL BIHAR

Older anthropologists thought that in primitive societies classes did not exist or might exist only in an embryonic form. The Evolutionists imagined a classless structure in the dawn of human history. While this may be true of some societies which are in the collectional stage, it is no longer true for the tribal Bihar where class and caste cut through society as deeply as in any other village in the non-tribal area. In most cases the class structure is intermingled with caste. Tribal people have themselves evolved social and political distinctions between groups in village consequent upon the development of certain politico-economic factors. They have also been living in contact with non-tribals who have a well defined caste and class structure. As the non-tribals are more advanced than the tribals in material culture and also in social status, the latter think it elevating to emulate their example. The continuous impact has been both regular and casual. Many Hindu castes have been living together with tribals in tribal villages for centuries and have been integrated into the social system of the village. Without them perhaps the economic structure of the village may fall to pieces. Indeed, it is these 'foreign' elements which complete the self sufficiency of the tribal village. These two social groups have acted and reacted on each other and though they maintain their distinct identity, they are united for the one common purpose viz. to promote the prosperity and welfare of the village and its denizens. As for casual contact petty traders and low grade government servants who are representatives of a caste conscious society appear on the village scene every now and then. The total effect of such impact has been in some cases to transform the tribal group into a separate caste group like many of such groups in the village. When this metamorphosis is complete the village may no longer be called a tribal village.

In some tribal villages in Bihar, tribes have tended to assume characteristics of caste. Ketkar defines caste as 'a social group having two characteristics : (1) Membership is confined to those

who are born of members and includes all persons so born; (2) Members are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group'. (History of Caste in India, P. 15). Dutt adds that there are eating and drinking restrictions with members of other castes. (Origin and Growth of Caste in India, P. 3). Besides these within each such social group there are numerous exogamous units which may vary in social status. All these features are found in tribal Bihar. All the tribes are closed social groups and membership is confined to those who are born in that group. Natural members can be denied membership only as a punishment for some serious transgression of the tribal group and only in very special cases marriage with outsiders is tolerated. This transgression is allowed with one or two tribes which originally belonged to the same group. In other cases this results in excommunication and in Santal Parganas an extreme form of social punishment called Sitlaha is resorted to right such social wrong. Not only is intermarriage between two tribal groups forbidden but social distance is also expressed in eating and drinking restrictions between members of different tribes. If a person is guilty of the breach of this rule, he is liable to be excommunicated though this guilt is not so severe as the one mentioned before. In such cases on payment of the usual fine to the tribal social authorities the culprit may be readmitted into the tribal fold.

Among the Munda and the Oraon the tribal community in the village is divided into two groups. One group consists of Khutkattidars or the descendants of the original settlers of the village who generally belong to one clan and the other comprises of later settlers. In most cases the majority of the second group consists of cognatic relations of the Khutkattidars. They are known as *Parja* and used to pay rent for their land to the Khutkattidars. They are not considered socially inferior to the Khutkattidars and are admitted to all social, religious and economic activities of the village. In the sasan of a Munda village only the bones of the Bhuinhars or Khutkattidar may be buried. But if a non-Bhuinhari family has lived in a village for several generations and is treated for matrimonial purposes as belonging to one of the clans of the village, the bones of its members may be interred in the sasan of one of the Bhuinhar clans. These villagers who are neither Bhuinhars nor residents of long standing are buried in a separate burial ground called masara. But even those alien families which have been accorded

the privilege of being interred in the sasan may not have Samandiri (memorial slabs) erected to their memory. Thus even death does not blur the social distinction between descendants of village founders and later arrivals. The clan of the original settlers is the dominant clan in the village and most of the officers like Munda and the Pahan are recruited from it. In this dominant clan are two lineages, the Mahto or Mundā Khut and the Pahan Khut. These two lineages are more or less equally important and enjoy greater prestige than rest of the village community.

In the early days of British rule the Pahan was the superme head of the village and acted as the elder or patriarch of the village family. He not only regulated the relations between the villagers and the supernatural but presided over the village Panchayat and collected tribute on behalf of the Raja. It is true that in his secular duties he was assisted by the Munda. After a lapse of time when the impact of foreign rule made deep impression on village life there was a reversal in the position of the Pahan and Munda. The Munda now became supreme in village affairs and the Pahan was relegated into background with only sacerdotal functions. In the gradual process of this reversal the nearest relatives of the Munda supported him against the Pahan who in his turn was backed by those Khutkattidars who were his kin. Thus factions arose which brought the so-called Munda and Pahan lineage into exaggerated importance. The strife between two lineages spread to all villages. In the village of Anigara I even found the sasans of the two lineages situated separately though as members of one clan they should have been buried in the same sasan or bone burial ground.

The entire Munda tribe consists of an elder and younger branch, the Mahali Mundako and the Kompat Mundako respectively. The former are found mainly in Tamar Pargana of the Ranchi District and are also known as Patar. Ordinary Munda or those belonging to the younger branch form the bulk of the Munda population. Both these branches are endogamous. The former are considered socially inferior to the latter. The reason given for this lower status is contained in a story which tells how the progenitor of this group ate a piece of umbilical cord of a member of the other group. 'But the real reason is to be found in the fact that this group has come less under the

influence of Hinduism.' (Koppors : India and Dual Organization ; Acta Tropica, Vol. I, 1944., P. 80).

In Tamar area the social stratification among the Munda has reached a developed form. Six distinct classes or castes may be distinguished. These may be grouped into two viz. (a) The Zamindars or landords and (b) the tenants. In group A we have at the top, landlords called Thakur who hold above fifteen villages each. Next come Manki who are lesser landlords holding upto ten or eleven villages each. Some of these landlords got themselves enumerated as Kshatriyas in the last census with a view to raise themselves in the eyes of their Hindu neighbours. But for all practical purposes they are Munda. Both these classes are endogamous and only in rare cases does an intermarriage takes place between the two. In the third class may be placed Munda or the village headman who owns only one village either in Khutkatti right or as a lesee of the landlord. He settles land with some members of his family and those landholders are known as Babu who form the fourth class of the social hierarchy. In group B are the Mundari who are Munda tenants. Intermarriage between Mundari and the above mentioned four classes is well nigh impossible due to great disparity in economic and social status. At the bottom of the Munda society in Tamar are the Patar who belong to the *Mahali-Mundako* branch of the tribe. Though they hold small bits of land there is no social intercourse between them and the upper five groups. Not only is intermarriage unthinkable but even water cannot be taken from the hands of a Patar.

Thus we see that although the Munda community in Tamar belongs to a single tribe deep seated social distinctions have come to be formed. If somebody from one of the higher classes takes a fancy for a girl of the lower class he may keep her as a mistrees without marrying her. A separate apartment in the house may be given to her and the man would not accept cooked food from her hands. Even in the same social class people would be chary of accepting food from the hands of a stranger. Relationship of some sort direct and indirect must be traced before food may be accepted. This social stratification resembling the caste system is evidently the result of continuous impact of the Hindu Caste system in Tamar.

'One of the most important results of culture contact among the Ho (of Kolhan) has been the fission of the tribe into classes

which share the same economic environment, co-operate with one another in all their economic undertakings, offer prayers and sacrifices to the same Bongas, participate in customary feasts and festivities, recognize relationship between themselves as members of the clan and the tribe and yet maintain their identity.' (Majumdar: Affairs Of A Tribe, P. 232). Any person who breaks social taboos is branded as Kajomesin (one from whom a Ho does not take food). No social relationship with an ordinary Ho and a Kajomesin is possible unless society readmits him after the necessary purificatory ritual. Even if he dies his corpse cannot be touched by members of his clan or village nor interred in the Sasan. Even when readmitted he does not attain full social status within the village. He finds it difficult to arrange the marriage of his children and has often to pay a higher bride-price than people of his status. The stigma endures and this has resulted in the formation of a class within class as the Kajomesins find it convenient to marry amongst themselves.

Among the Ho two clans Kedenkel and Bage are considered to have the lowest social status. People of this clan even if taken in matrimony by other clans are not allowed to eat together. Like the Munda, the Ho do not accept food from persons with whom no relationship can be traced either directly or indirectly.

Among the Dhelki Kharia we have a striking example of social stratification. Of their eight original clans the *Mail* and the *Topno* are regarded as lower in rank than the others. Members of other Kharia clans do not take food cooked by persons of these clans although they eat cooked food at the hands of Bhuiyas, Kherwar and Kawar tribes and Rantia and Mahakur castes. There is no bar however to intermarriage between the above mentioned two clans and the other class. The Mura clan on the other hand is regarded as highest in social rank. This is followed in status by the Samad clan. Men belonging only to these clans can act as heads of tribal council or panchayat. In tribal gatherings or feasts; such as at birth, death and marriage celebrations, men of the Muru clan are given the rank of *Pandiha* or giver of water and men of the Samad clan act as *Bhandari* or steward. A man of the Muru clan must eat the first morsel at a social feast of the Dhelki Kharias after which others may start. Social heads of the tribe and the tribal councils must be selected from either of the three clans of Dung

dung, Kulu, Samad or Kerketta, who take rank one after the other and have social precedence over all the remaining clans. (S. C. Roy & R. C. Roy : The Kharias, Vol. I, pp. 128 and 193).

Besides the cleavages in tribal society mentioned above almost all villages contain a number of outside castes which are employed in trades in which the tribals think it derogatory to engage. Oraon do not engage in weaving, basketry, wicker work and pottery. So in Oraon villages we may find one or two families of Ahirs or Hindu cowherds, Ghasi, Gorait, Julaha and Mahali etc. In Munda villages we find Lohar, Kumhar, Turi, Ghasi, Baraik, Tanti etc. All these little communities regard the tribals of their own village as occupying a higher social status than themselves. They have been integrated into the functional frame work of the village because they do certain specialized tasks for the dominant community. Though considered apart from the tribals they co-operate in the working of the village economy and only in social matters do they form a separate entity. These castes now use the same types of household utensils, agricultural implements, tools and weapons, live in the same style of huts and wear the same kind of ornaments as the dominant community. At times they are so thick and thin with the tribals, most of them speaking the tribal languages, that it is difficult to indentify them.

In Tamar area each Munda family has its own set of Brahman, barbers and Gosain. Mundas in that area have almost adopted all Hindu religious ceremonials and hence the importance of these castes in that area. In some areas under the Khunti police station we find a caste called Manjhi who are landlords. Now almost Hinduized, they still have some relics of their tribal heritage.

The Ahirs are important as they tend cattle of the villagers on a fixed customary annual payment varying with the number of cattle given to them for grazing.

The Ghasi cut grass, tend horses and act as musicians at village festivals. The men are feared as petty thieves and their woman are reputed to have easy morals. Col. Dalton speaks of them as "an extra-ordinary tribe, foul parasites of Central Indian Hill tribes." Some times their woman act as midwives or nurses. (Russell and Hiralal : Tribes and Castes of Central Provinces, Vol. III, p. 27)

The Goraits are a Hinduized aboriginal caste who carry messages, act as drummers, make combs and card cotton. Their women do the work of tatooers. In some villages the Gorait family hold what is called Geraiti Khet (service lands).

In Oraon areas we find the Muslim caste of Julaha or weavers while in Tamar this work is done by the Tanti caste. Turi and Mahali are engaged in the making of baskets and other wicker work. Barhi (carpenter), Lohar (blacksmith) and Kumhar (potter) are also found in some villages.

Apart from the tribal group and the Hindu or Muslim caste groups we have the converted tribal group. These Christian converts even if they do not form a substantial part of the village population lead a separate existence. They are usually a closely knit group except in villages where they are converts of more than one denomination e.g. Roman Catholic, G.E.L. Mission and the S.P.G. Mission etc. as in village Birhu, three miles from Khunti. The level of aspiration of this group is much higher than that of other groups. Almost all of them are literate if not better educated, keep their houses clean, wear shirts and shorts and send their children to mission schools. Their centre of activity is the nearby church. The preacher not only looks after their spiritual welfare, but advises them on mundane problems of daily life. They have implicit faith in the leadership of the priest and at times where there is a conflict of loyalty between their village and their faith it is the latter that triumphs. In some villages they take part in the social life of the village but they have nothing to do with the ritual activities of the village. Other communities in the village maintain considerable social distance from the Christians. While the Christians have no objection to take food from the hands of non-Christian tribals, the latter can not do so. There is of course no question of any marriage between tribal Christian and non-Christian tribals.

The effect of foreign contact on the incipient class and caste system in tribal Bihar may be seen in two stages. It may be that before contact began to produce effective results the social stratification based on the command over economic resources as in Tamar may not have come into being. The craze for imitation of the social system of the Hindus which characterised the first phase of the psychological reaction to the politico-

economic changes must have led to the fossilization of the class system. Growth of education and of missionary activity brought about the second psychological phase. The rising tide of political consciousness is bridging the gaps between the social classes. Members of all clans are thinking that they are all equal, one and same. Even people belonging to different tribes are forging new bonds of unity to strengthen their demand for more autonomy than hitherto enjoyed by them. But the two kinds of reaction cannot be put into chronological periods as both are present but at different places and even at different levels at the same place.

At a time when resurgent Hinduism is forcing caste system to shed its rigidity and lose its stings tribal society has been striving to imbibe it from the low Hindu castes. It is a happy augury for the whole Indian social system that the second psychological reaction is strengthening our efforts for a classless and casteless society. What the picture will be after some time will depend on how swiftly we move to the goal of socialist society.

THE ROLE OF MUSIC AND DANCE IN TRIBAL LIFE

I

'Sen ge susun, Kaji ge durang' (To walk is to dance, to speak is to sing) — Munda proverb.

An enunciation of the role of music and dance in tribal life is pretty difficult. Music and dance are not specialised aspects of tribal life as they are in ours. Their entire life and being are interwoven with music and dance and a full appreciation of them is not possible without a knowledge of their life and living.

"The dance," says Curt Sachs, author of the monumental work, 'History of the Dance', "is the mother of the arts. Music and poetry exist in time ; painting and architecture in space. But the dance lives at once in time and space". The tribals are poor and economically backward. Even though they may have no instruments or no materials for other arts, the rhythmic pattern of movement of the body can itself be a source of joy. Among Indian tribals there is little of graphic or plastic art, they do not have tools for painting or sculpture. Nature has endowed him with a fine body. Music and poetry are in his soul. The dance becomes the chief insrument of his culture.

Dance and song have an important role in the socialization of the tribal child. Children sit between their father's knees, their tiny hands strike the cymbals or metal keys or hold the drumsticks. It almost seems that they absorb the rhythm and postures of the dance. There is appropriate music and dance for every occasion, birthdays and weddings, for purification, feasts, for driving away diseases and demons. Participation in dance is in two ways. People either dance and sing or sit as spectators. Watching dancing for the tribal is not a matter of such concentrated attention as with us. It is almost a state of being a feeling rather than an action. We gaze and gaze with an earnestness of purpose which fatigues us long before the dance is over. The tribal enters into the atmosphere of

the dance and remains there as in a familiar landscape. Nature does not make perpetual demands on one's attention, nor does a dance performance on the tribals. It is just there to be enjoyed in a variety of ways.

II

An exploration of the hidden springs of music and dance in tribal life is rewarding. The tribals live, move and have their being among the sights and sounds of nature. The murmur of a forest streamlet, the sight of a waterfall, a peacock spreading his multi-coloured feathers, a herd of goats or sheep grazing quietly, a bell tinkling here and there, trees laden with flowers and fruit swell the springs of music. A tribal youth tending cattle in a lonely valley or on a hill top beguiles his solitude with melodies produced by the flute. Wherever he is, the tribal gives vent to his emotions of joy or sorrow without any inhibition. His culture does not require him to sublimate his feeling as ours does. His feelings find an easy expression. They are spontaneous and charged with deep emotions. A moment of joy is enjoyed with complete abandon, an occasion of grief is full of poignancy. Music and dance mark these occasions and through them the tribal expresses himself. His numerous festivals and *jatras* give him repeated opportunities for the display of music and dance for long periods. On these occasions there is a free flow of the native tribal drink, a kind of home brewed beer prepared from rice, mahua etc. Besides supplying many nutrients which the tribal lacks in his diet, the drink acts as a stimulant and gives him so much energy that even a whole nights' dancing does not tire him out. For the time being he forgets all his troubles, economic and otherwise. He has no emotional tension, no mental reservations and the only restraints on his behaviour are those prescribed by the social code. Dance and song supplement each other. The sweeter the melody, the more vigorous and spirited is the dance. Among the tribes of Bihar there are no silent dances. The full throated melody and the exquisite footwork are vitally connected.

The social structure of the tribals promotes song and dance. There is complete equality between the sexes. There is no women. Youngmen and women meet in the home, agricultural field and forest. They meet in the dancing ground of their own village and go in a body for visits to other villages

where they are honoured guests. The dancing ground is not only a place of entertainment or training in song and dance, it is also a rendezvous for courtship. This role of music and dance is fully recognized by society. Girls and boys excel each other in these arts so that they may attract the best partners. Their songs laden with the love theme, have a seductive charm. There are also ordinary subjects for songs such as grazing of goats and gathering of leaves. Munda folk songs along with their Hindi translation have been published by Sri Jagdish Trigunayat. Archer has published two volumes of Oraon folk songs in their Engish translation.

III

Dance for the tribal is not just a form of recreation. Those who decry dancing have viewed it as base in its origin as it is only a safety valve for the release of surplus physical and emotional energy. Due to its association with tribal courtship it has even been called an expression of stylized animality. A closer study of the social function of dance in tribal India reveals that it is much more than this. Its roots may be found in love and war, while some of the best dances have sprung from the expression of religious devotion. Dance has so much in common with poetry that Plutarch called it 'silent poetry.' Bergson, the philosopher interpreted it in terms of grace and rhythm and held it to be a symbol of spiritual life. Nietzsche saw in it an image of wisdom. A dancer has clear eyes and light foot. With these he treads upon the 'muddy afflictions of life' with comparative ease. Dancing helps the tribal forget his poverty and anxiety for the time being. It gives him at the same time a sense of discipline and organization and a feeling for group or community action.

War Dances : Until recently Indian tribal group frequently engaged in warfare. Though in peninsular Indian warfare has almost ceased, in north-eastern India it is still common. Tribal raids on non-tribal villages or inter village feuds are almost an everyday occurance. The Konyak Nagas have still a splendid war dance The Sawlakia dance of the Lakher of the Lushai Hills in Assam is specifically a martial dance. The Saila dance performed at the court of old Gond Rajas was a kind of war dance. At the time of Jeth Jatra among the Oraon, youngmen

of each Parha[1] enter the dancing ground waving their long Parha flags and brandishing their sticks and clubs. This is almost a war dance. In days gone by, Jeth Jatra was the time for settling old disputes over game hunted or otherwise. More often than not, parties come to the place, prepared for a fight and even now there it is only rarely that people disperse peacefully. Fight ensues at the slightest provocation. Besides this dance, the Oraon have a mock war dance known as Paiki dance which is performed when a wedding procession arrives as warriors, one or two of them carrying swords and shields and others carrying sticks. A mock fight accompanied by dancing ensues at the end of which the bride is carried off to the house of bridegroom for marriage. This is a semblance of marriage by capture which may have been practised in the past.

Animal Dances : Among natural objects animals arouse the interest of tribals very much. In some of their dances, they imitate the movement of animals. The Andamanese have a remarkable turtle dance. The Bhuiyas of Orissa have a snake dance. Some girls covered from head to foot lie flat on the ground and pursue the male drummers, wriggling along like a snake. Snake dance was also prevalent among the Gond and Baiga of Mandla. A great column of men danced round and about like a snake. The climax was reached when the head of the snake tried to bite the man at the tail. It was an anxious moment for it was believed that if he succeeded the victim was expected to lose his life actually within a year. Among the Muria and the Khond in one dance, the manner in which boys and girls move in a long line is reminiscent of the movement of reptiles.

The Juangs of Orissa have a highly developed animal ballet. Their actions imitate sparrows picking up their food from the ground, deer running and leaping from the forest, the graceful spread of the peacock's feathers and the staggering walk of an elephant. In course of their vulture dance, a girl lies on the ground with her face downward to simulate a corpse and the dancers prance round and pretend to pull the dead body to pieces.

1. A confederation of villages.

In Madhya Pradesh, one of the popular dances is the Sua. The Sua or the parrot, the wise bird is the carrier of messages between long separated lovers or friends. It is a woman's dance and at their best, they are able to attain a close approximation of the bird's movement, specially of its feet. With the passage of time, dance styles developed and some of these simple animal dances have tended to become stylised and move away from Nature.

Hunting Dances : Dances and songs are believed to bring happiness and prosperity and a stimulation of the helpful forces of Nature so that the earth may be fruitful and men may be blessed with an abundance of animal and vegetable food. In certain seasons of the year the Oraon go out for hunting. It begins from Phagu shikar or Spring hunt followed by Bisu Shikar or summer hunt and rounded off by Jeth shikar or rainy season hunt. In the dances connected with these hunting excursions we find a pantomimic representation of different hunting operations. These are the Kharia dances in which men carry clubs and sticks. Men and women are mixed up in an orderly way. The dancers move in parallel columns, each dancer facing his or her neighbour's back. They divide themselves into two parties, each singing by turns. At the termination of a song or portion of a song the dancers with a half turn spread out in a line, come to a halt and after a long leap, two short leaps and a high jump, stamp their feet vigorously down on the ground, shouting a deafening chorus Hir-r-r or Jur-r-r. Once more they form into columns as before and go on dancing or marching soldier like — walking and running.

The Mundas have a hunting dance called Japi. The songs sung during the dance when young and old return from the forest relate to hunting. On entering the village sreet the hunters are received by the women. Then dancing the Japi they proceed towards the *Akhra* or village dancing ground. The men carry bows, arrows, spears and swords. On the other side the girls form a column by putting their hand on the waist of the next dancer.

Agricultural Dances : The Karam dances of the Oraon and the Munda are associated with agriculture in a significant way. Their season is from June to September. After the Jeth-Jatra in

June, agricultural operations proceed in full vigour. There is strict division of labour between men and women in agriculture. The Karam dances are a stylized imitation of the occupations of men and women. As in their work in fields, so in their dances men and women are not mixed together but arranged in separate groups. Their posture is graceful and movements slow. Young men at times kneel down and each girl stooping low sways one arm back and fore, as if imitating harvesting of paddy. Sarat Chandra Roy is inclined to think that this movement of the hands may be a magical device to ensure an abundant harvest. The young man who leads the dance and some others carry *sailos* or *chawar* made of wild date palm which they wave over the ground as if imploring the earth to yield plentiful crops. The chorus with which Karam dances begin is 'Bhale Bhale Ho' or 'let there be good produce'.

From the second half of Aswin (September-October) the paddy crops begin to ripen. The sight of full grown and ripe paddy gladdens the heart of all agriculturists, young and old alike. This is the time for watching of crops so that pigs, deer and other animals may not eat them. The Oraons brandish clubs and sticks to ward them off. One variety of Kharia dances (a war dance) is popular in this season. As men and women join hands in the harvesting of paddy, so they dance together in one and the same row in the Chirdi Kharia dances. Some Naga dancing, at any rate, e.g., the remarkable leaping indulged in by some Angami Nagas at which weapons are not carried, is intended to promote the growth of crops.

Among the Bhils too mixed parties of men and women represent by dance the agricultural operations of the whole year symbolically like the sowing of seeds, sprouting of grains and harvesting.

Religious Dances : On account of their intense emotional value, dances enter into all situations of life that go with intense emotional reactions. Religion offers numerous occasions for music and dance which are in part an expression of the excitement inherent in the situations and in part a means of exciting the passions. For the Saora of Orissa dance did not come into being as a form of recreation, it was not invented only for pleasure, from the beginning it was serious business. It is not

indulged in for mere fun, even its form and shape depend upon the function it fulfills in Saora society. Like classic Bondo and Khond dances, it is a serious piece of ritual conduct. The religious character of the dance is evident from the incidents that occur during its course. A woman Shaman,[1] who become possessed by an ancestor will, begins moving about wildly, putting on his spirit's turban and waving his sword. A Shaman may dress in the clothes of his spirit wife and dance like a woman. A priest possessed by a deity and covered by a sheet may lead the dancers from shrine to shrine at a Harvest festival. Men and women shamans once possessed torment themselves with chronic convulsions, they roll on the ground, tear at their hair, sway to and fro in complete abandon and dance on their knees. The shamans often dance by themselves during the ceremonies they conduct. At the sacrifice of a goat or a pig which has been dedicated for the good of the crops, a shaman shoots arrows into the decapitated head. As he does so, he dances slowly hopping to and fro, gyrating on one leg, running forward in a sort of charge to release his missile.

Analysing Saora dancing Elwin observes : "The first dancers were the shamans, and their dances were, as they still often are, convulsive and ecstatic". When others came to join a mixed form of art came into being.

Among the Muria Gonds of Bastar song and dance are an important part of the Ghotul[2] life. The *chelik*[3] and *motiari*[4] dance in honour of the clan god, village gods and the Ghotul god. These dances are best observed when youths and maidens from a dozen villages assemble in their full dancing dress and they dance en masse all night. Four to five hundred dancers spread themselves over a great field and move round to the light of torches, the blowing of hunting horns, the clang of bells, the waving of innumerable plumes. The earth itself seems to become alive. It is surprising to find that ecstacy and delight of the youths and maidens urge them to dance untiringly before their gods for such long hours.

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1. A spiritualist who is a medium and a diviner.
2. Youth dormitory for boys and girls.
3. Boy members of the youth dormitory.
4. Girlme mbers of the youth dormitory.

Besides these formal dances, there are individual dances of gods, medeciners, the horses of gods. These leap in the air, roll on the ground, fight one another, here a medium may be seen in a spirited combat with a stock-god defending himself against its blows with a small shield, there is an *Anga Pen*[1] refreshing itself by disturbing a line of Motiari. There may be two gods who are not on best of terms chase each other, digging in and out of the groups of amused spectators.

In most tribal communities, dances held at the time of religious festivals are very attractive. Among the Munda and Oraon there are special dances for each festival. At the time of the Sarhul festival, Jadur dance is the most popular. It is a fast dance with a lot of action. The dance begins with the formation of one or more lines by the girls who stand on one side of the dancing ground. A number of young men stand at a little distance from there in two or three rows. Between these boys and girls stand two or more young men with nagara and mandal drums. Young men first begin a song. When they finish the first portion, the girls repeat it. The boys advance two paces towards the girls who recede three steps backwards. The parties alternately advance and recede till the girls have finished the second half of the song. Throughout the dance most perfect rhythm of foot and voice is maintained and the dancers keep time with the drums. Among the Munda, Gena and Japi are the other two dances associated with Sarhul festival.

At the time of the Karam festival in September the Munda and Oraon regale themselves with Karam and Lahasua dances. Boys and girls standing in different columns sing the songs together and not by turns. Each dancer clasps the hand of his or her neighbour. In these dances, dancers have to stoop very low, head forward. The steps do not move fast but the entire body has to swing. Sometimes the drummers and the boys may kneel down or squat on the ground, the drummer might make a somersault and the dance starts again. There are several variations of the Karam dance among the Oraon.

Jarga is the dance associated with the Maghe Parab of the Munda.

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1. A Muria-Gond god.

Among the Ao Nagas of Nagaland, dancing plays an important part in all ceremonies, but the steps are very monotonous. At mithan sacrifices men and women dance a dance called Tsumgsang inside the house of the giver of the feast. It consists of a circle of alternate men and women with linked arms chanting and moving slowly round in line to the singing. All those taking part chant continually. In the Mootsu festival performers walk slowly round in a body chanting and showing off their finery. From time to time, one will break away and give an exhibition of jumping and spear twisting. There are a series of dances in one of which the dancers move in column of fours formation in quick time to the tap of the drum, the column wheeling about in all directions, like a fish swimming.

The Bhils have many dances associated with Holi and Divali festivals. Durng Holi, they practise many dances. In one women hold one another at the waist with one hand and move forward in a semi-circle towards the drum beater who is in the centre, and at every third step each strikes the anklets in her legs against one another, thus producing a rhythmic and somewhat hollow sound. They go on singing at the same time. Men have a separate Holi dance. The Gosai dance is accompanied by an orchestral variety, one party rubs a bamboo chip against another bamboo piece and produces a musical sound, a second plays on pavri[1], a third beats, a tom. All the dancers dance in a semi circle with fast moving steps. Just after Holi the whole village joins en masse in a big dance akin to an attack dance.

The festival of Divali is preceded by a picturesque dance when some men put on the dress of women, tie bells round their ankles, take two small sticks in their hands and dance. They play in a circle inside while the drummers go on beating the tom toms. To the tune of these drums each dancer strikes his sticks against those of another, then jumps on to another and strikes against his stick ; thus round and round they go. The movement is quick, the sticks strike with a thud and the bells jingle. The multicoloured costume of the dancers present a beautiful scene.

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1. **A musical instrument.**

Marriage Dances : Among all communities a marriage is an occasion of joy and festivity. For several days during the various rituals connected with marriage dancing goes on. It is believed that it is a time of crisis or danger as the couple are in a transition from one stage of life to another. It is necessary to protect them from evil influences which are likely to affect them. So the dancers weave a magic circle round them. It is also felt that strength and virility should be transferred to them. There is some idea of purifying them also. The dancers with their vigour and the drummers with the thunder of their drums put their life into the young couple.

The Muria Gonds of Bastar distinguish between many rhythms in their drumming. These rhythms are not connected with steps but are sometimes associated with the special movements of the dance. There are different rhythms for dances round the marriage booth, for the great crisis of Lagir (essential binding part of the rite) and to lead the bride and bridegroom to the marriage bed. When the bride or the bridegroom according to local custom arrives at the other's house, he or she is greeted by a procession of dancers. The drummers first circle round, all facing one direction, then they split up into pairs and each pair faces its opposite This is a memorable event in the life of every boy and girl. When the two father-in-laws meet officially for the first time, the *Chelik* dance round them in a circle facing each other in pairs. The occasion, when they drink liquor as part of a ritual, is marked by a different dance rhythm. When boys bring wood for constructing the marriage booth, the drummers go to the forest and return dancing and drumming vigorously at the head of the procession. The tedious business of annointing the bride and the bridegroom with oil which continues for two days is enlivened by some excellent dancing. Same is the case when the couple have to go round the booth seven times in a procession of *Chelik* with their drums and by loudly singing *motiari*. The couple are not allowed to slip away quietly to bed, they are escorted to that place with the roar of drums. In this dance, the boys from time to time raise both hands from their drums and wave their arms in the air like excited cocks.

Among the Munda and the Oraon, the period from the paddy harvest to the Phagu festival is the season for marriages.

There are ghostly weddings in the beginning, human wedding in the middle, and divine wedding at the end. The principal dance of the season is Jadur dance. There is a long line of maidens with their arms interlaced retreating backwards as the young men advance towards them with measured steps to the sound of the drums. At the end of each song there is a shouting in chorus — Le-le-du-r-r-r-, which Sarat Chandra Roy thinks as indicative of intense yearning and eager pursuit. In the Jatra Kharia dances males and females are intermixed and arranged in a column one behind the other. This might symbolise the bliss of wedded love. The Paika dance which has been described earlier is also popular at the time of marriages. At the wedding ceremony, the Oraon dance the Benja Nalna dance. Each woman carries one or the other of the benedictory things used in the wedding to bring luck and happiness to the new couple. The dance is to the accompaniment of Dhol, Nagera, Shahnai and trumpet.

Dancing expeditions : Among many tribes men and women in dancing parties visit neighbouring villages. They are entertained sumptuously by the host village. Among the Muria and the Oraon such expeditions are common. These expeditions give an opportunity for boys and girls to meet their counterparts in other villages and from them choose their marriage partners. The dance is a sexual stimulant and by giving opportunity for the two sexes to meet in the exciting atmosphere of rhythm and music, it undoubtedly promotes love affairs. Of all the opportunities for romantic adventure provided by Muria society none is more exciting than the Diwali dance of the girls. Diwali is just an indication of the date, it has nothing to do with the Hindu festival. During this season the motiari go from village to village dancing and singing. There is no special religious or magical purpose in these expeditions, they are simply for enjoyment and amorous adventure. Only girls led by their leader visit any village of their choice and only boys of that village may be present to entertain them. The evenings are fruitful of love affairs and sometimes a chelik now meets his future wife. The Oraon dancing expeditions organized by the youth dormitory serve the same purpose.

A large number of Muria dances are not called *endanna* (dance) but *Karsana* (*games*). The distinction is not one of

form but of occasion. The dance is performed at special times — at a marriage festival or expedition. Karsana or a game can be performed at any time and usually is danced informally in a ghotul. The Kokora (Crane) game dance of the girls is interesting. The essence of this dance is sexual imitation, the crane being a sexual symbol.

IV

Among some peoples the role of dancing in education and socialization of children is very important. Margaret Mead has analysed the significance of dancing in this regard with reference to the people of Samoa. In Samoa, dancing is a highly individual activity set in a social framework. It is at small informal dances that children learn to dance. In front of the house youngmen sit who assess the dance. The form of the participation of the audience changes according to the age of the dancers. The performance of the dances is commented upon encouragingly. Little children are put upon these public floors with a minimum of preliminary instruction. As babies in their mother's laps they learn to clap before they learn to walk. The child who performs best is loudly applauded. No one is too young to sing or dance or even to lead singing and dancing.

The significance of the dance in the education and socialization of Samoan children is two-fold. It effectively offsets the rigorous subordination in which children are kept. The children form the centre of the group rather than its fringes. Its other function is to reduce the threshold of shyness. Limelight is inevitable. The beneficial effects of this early habituation to the public eye and the resulting control of the body is noticeable both in boys and girls. They are not self conscious on the stage. Those who are physically defective get an opportunity through dance to gain self-confidence and win praise in society.

V

Dance and music play such a vital role in some tribal communities that there are well recognized institutions for giving youths and maidens training in these arts. In a large

part of the Oraon area, among the Muria and the Maria Gonds, among the Naga tribes of North-eastern India we have youth dormitories where regular instruction in song and dance is imparted every evening. Each dormitory has an elaborate organization with a head, junior members and senior members. The senior members see to it that the best training is given to the junior members and the new entrants. There is a special officer to see that young boys and girls come to the dance at the right time, put on the right costume and take the proper steps. If he finds a habitual defaulter, he takes him to task. The musical instruments are kept in the dormitory and generally all dances take place on the ground in front of that building. In those Oraon villages where the youth dormitory or the Dhumkuria is still active dances take place almost every day just after the evening meal. Thus dance and music are part of the daily routine of the tribals. Elders and children who do not participate in the dances daily remain there as eager spectators and the former see to it that the tribal social code is not transgressed by any one of the dancers.

In most of the villages of Chotanagpur we have a dancing ground known as Akhra. This is sometimes a raised circular platform or just a piece of flat land in the middle of the village. All round it big stone slabs are kept which serve as seats for the spectators.

VI

Dance, melody and the accentuated rhythm of gong, drums, cymbals form together an indivisible whole. The music is indeed danced. Most tribal groups have exquisite folk songs dealing with different subjects and suited to different occasions. They are also rich in musical instruments. Among the Muria 'Lingo'[1] was the first musician and the practice of music is honourably rooted in the history and mythology of the tribe. It is believed that 'Lingo' had eighteen musical instruments which he played all at once. There are six kinds of drums, gong, Sarangi, fiddle, horn, flute, pellet bells, anklets, cymbals etc. Among the Chotanagpur tribes also we have the flute and other wind instruments of indigenous variety with khol, Dhak, Dholak and Nagera serving as accompaniment and Manjira, kartal and

1. A noble Gond cult-hero.

kanshi keeping time. The dancers intoxicated with pure rhythm lose themselves in ecstaly lnmindful of their earthly surroundings. Tempo, rhythm and complete abandon, these are all for them.

Unfortunately under the stress of modernism many of the youth dormitories have disappeared or are disappearing. Youths and maidens are shy to admit of their existence. The *Akhra* dance is also getting scarce. Some educated and Christian tribals decry dancing at the *Akhra* and have begun to regard it as disreputable. Some missionaries positively discourage them from participating in these dances. They are thus forgetting their own songs and distinctive dance styles. Government has done well to organize divisional, state and national level folk festivals. The Radio Stations have also taken up the good cause of tribal music and dance. We have, however, to make sure that the talent does not remain confined to a few dance parties and that music and dance are rehabilitated in tribal life and thought. The Bharatiya Nritya Kala Mandir, under the wise guidance of Sri Hari Uppal has undertaken a survey of folk dance in Bihar. It is hoped that music and dance will continue as a live art form in tribal areas as elsewhere. If they languish and disappear a big void will be created in tribal life.

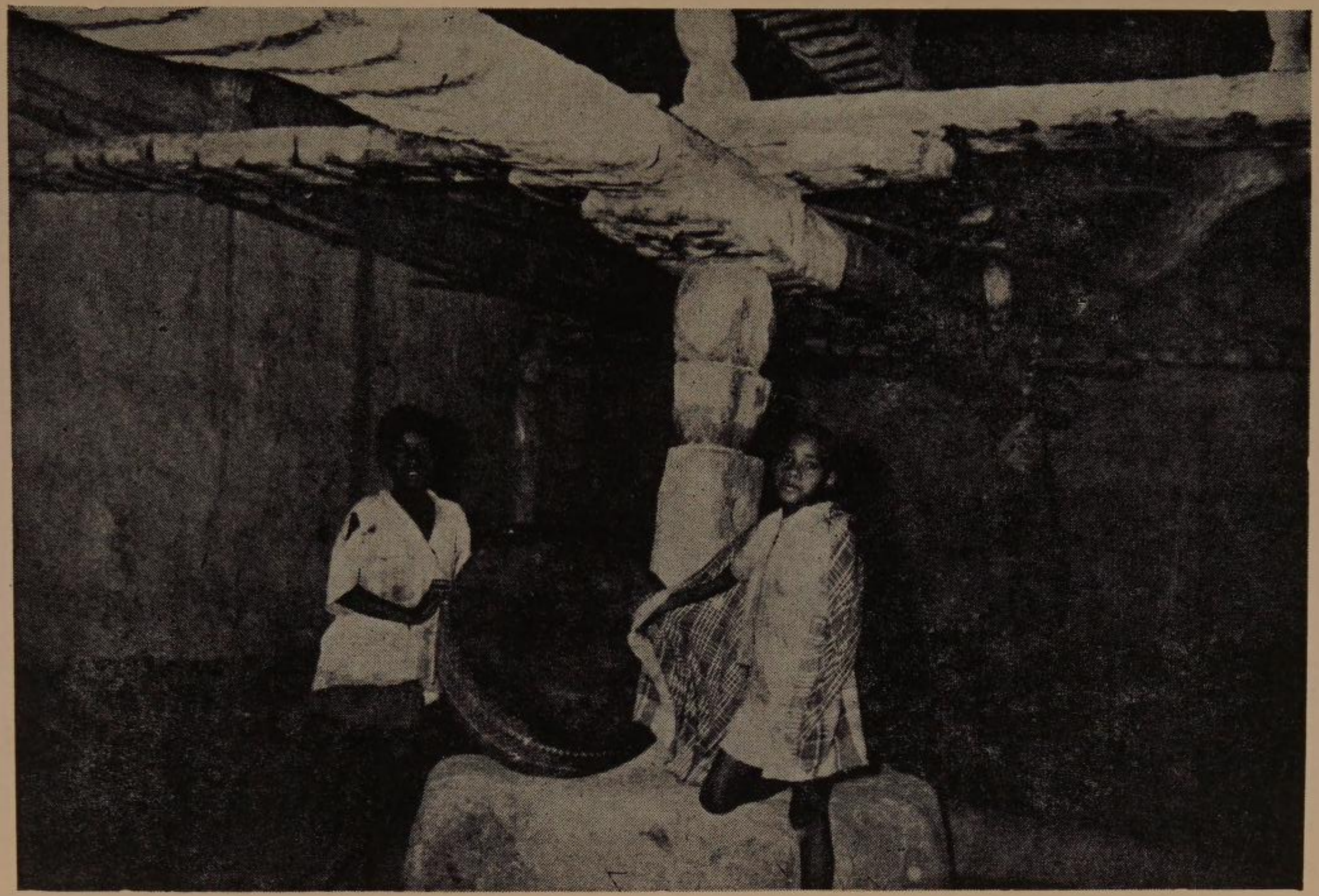
THE DHUMKURIA, THEN AND NOW

The institution of the youth dormitory in India has engaged the attention of anthropologists ever since the publication of accounts of such organisation among the Naga and the Oraon. Towards the close of the 19th century, Peal (1893) drew attention to the fact that, from Bhutan to New Zealand and from Marquesas to Niger, the system of youth dormitories existed and was distinguished by certain common features viz. the existence of a recognised building for unmarried young men and girls to sleep sometimes separately and sometimes together, complete liberty between the sexes before marriage, and the ban on the entry of married women into the dormitory.

The Oraon youth dormitory has been described from time to time by E. T. Dalton (1872), Father P. Dehon (1905) and S. C. Roy (1915). The description given by S. C. Roy is most elaborate. From reading his account one gathers the impression that the youth dormitory occurs in all Oraon villages and the customs associated with it are universal for the Oraon areas. It also seems that all the dormitories in Roy's time were equally active and performed all the functions described by him. Verrier Elwin visited some Oraon youth dormitories in 1940 and has given a short account of them in 'The Muria and their Ghotul' (1947). He noticed a great many changes from the description given by S. C. Roy. In order to measure the change that has come over the Oraon youth dormitory it will be useful to recall in brief its chief features as described by S. C. Roy.

II.

According to S. C. Roy, the only indigenous institution for the training of youth which the Oraon possessed was the Dhumkuria. "It must have been an effective eoconomic organisation for purposes of food quest, a useful seminary for the training of young men in their social and other duties and an institution for magico-religious observances calculated to secure success in hunting and to augment the procreative power of young men so as to increase the number of hunters in the tribe". The youth dormitory building, where it existed consisted of a house with four mudwalls, one doorway and no windows. It was



Inside a Dhumkuria.

generally situated in a prominent part of the village. In most cases this building overlooked a beautifully kept dancing ground, sometimes surrounded by stone seats. The youths slept on palm-leaf mats, annually presented to them by the maidens of village. Bundles of straw were used as head rests. In winter, logs of wood were kept burning in one corner of the hall to keep it warm. The interior was kept fairly clean and tidy though the surroundings were insanitary. Adjoining the hall, and sometimes inside it, there was a stinking drain in which people urinated. In the hall were also kept flag poles, musical instruments like *nagara, dholak, narsingha,* and *jhanjh.* Besides these there were wooden replicas of certain totem animals like elephants, horses, tortoises and fish.

Boys were admitted to the dormitory, or *Jokherpa* as it is called by the Oraon, at the age of eleven or twelve. Roy holds that the age of admission was originally higher but a reduction in the marriageable age of boys and girls due to Hindu influence has led to a reduction in it. The youth divided into three classes or grades called 'tur' viz. *Puna Jokhar* or novices *Majh Turia Jokhar* or members of the intermediate class and *Koha Jokhar* or the oldest members. Membership of the first two grades lasted three years each ; in the last grades youths continued till marriage or till they had issues of their own. Supervision of the dormitory was vested in the hands of the Dhangar Mahto who was associated in his work by the Dhangar Kotwar. The Dhangar Mahto instructed the boys in social and religious duties while the Kotwar had to attend to the big tribal meets called Jatras and dances and to see that the boys were well equipped for them. He also collected flowers for the purpose and compelled disobedient boys to attend Jatra and dances. A pated straw whip was the insignia of his office. The Dhumkuria officers were elected for three years. These officers gave Oraon youth an early opportunity for exercise of responsibility and developing qualities of initiative and leadership.

Girls had their own dormitory known as the *Pel-erpa* though even in Roy's days it was not an independent structure. It was not a public building and its existence was not made public to outsiders. Its location was known only to its inmates and to those of *Jokherpa.* An elderly male Oraon known as *Pelo*

Kotwar was put in charge and under him there was a senior girl known as the *Borka Dhangrin* who directed and controlled the inmates on the spot. In this dormitory there were also three grades analogous to those in the boys' dormitory.

S. C. Roy reports that new boys were admitted to the youth's dormitory once in three years on the new day of the moon in the month of magh. The older boys decided as to which of the younger boys would be admitted. What happens to the boys left out has not been told us. Nor do we get any idea of the criteria of admission to the dormitory. The parents of the boy admitted had to pay some sort of a fee in the form of Karanj seeds which were later crushed into oil for lighting the dormitory. The scale of contribution was graduated according to the income of the parents. Boys of the youngest grade had to collect fuel for heating the dormitory in winter. They had to massage the bodies of their older colleagues as well as of other guests who stayed in the dormitory. They had also to run errands for the senior members. Discipline was rigorously imposed and the lot of the new entrants could not be envied as they were bullied and punished by their senior for any offence however minor.

The most important function of the Dhumkuria youths was the performance of religious and magical rituals to secure success in hunting and to ensure the multiplication of male children. From the day following their admission into the Dhumkuria, the boys were given instructions in their social and religious duties. Before they embarked on ceremonial hunting expeditions, the youths worshiped goddess Chandi. The youths of the dormitory had to make all arrangements for the hunts which were joined not only by members of one village but by most of the youths of the entire neighbourhood. In this way they imbibed team spirit and learned to work as incorporate entity for the common good. S. C. Roy thinks that through appropriate magic rites Goddess Chandi may be made to impart sufficient strength to the procreative powers of the young men so as to enable them to indefinitely increase the number of huntsmen in the tribe. Such propitiation of this goddess was performed shortly after the Sarhul festival. Procreative vigour may be acquired from such powerful natural objects as the *Sal* tree. Twice in the year, once about the week before the Phagu festival

and about a week before the Sarhul festival, the head of the Dhumkuria led the boys to a suitable selected place at some distance from their village where a curious ceremony was performed (Roy : 1915). According to Roy, the saliva of an efficient young man and the contact with the powerful Sal saplings and the sal stick are evidently supposed to promote fecundity.

When there was a wedding feast or in other feasts in the village the members of the Dhumkuria had to dress the animal and fowls for the occasion and act as cooks as well as look after the guests. If a villager was in need of services of labourers for thatching house or some other work he applied to the head of the Dhumkuria and struck a bargain with him. Services rendered in this way were known as *Pacha* services. The ways received were generally spent on the purchase of some musical instruments or other requisites specially for making flags.

The Dhumkuria youths were privileged to gather once a year, fruit from all Karanj tree of the village. They enjoyed the similar license in regard to Mahua tree of the village. The Mahua flowers were stored by the head of the Dhumkuria and later they were sent for distillation. The beer thus produced was used on the occasion of inter-village gatherings. An interesting magical ceremony, that the Oraon bachelors had to perform, was the driving away of the spirit that causes cattle disease. When such a disease appeared in a village, a day was fixed for driving away that spirit. At about mid-night the bachelors gathered in the dancing ground, stripped themselves completely naked and each took up cudgel in his hand. A village cow-herd with a wooden bell suspended by his neck was chased by the youths with shouts resembling the bellowing of cattle, when the latter was chased out of the bounds of the village he quickly dropped the cow-bell and beat a hasty retreat. Thus the disease was driven away from one village to the bounds of another village. The practice continued till the disease spirit was driven away from the entire neighbourhood.

In December every year, a day or two before the annual Harbori (bone burial) day, youths of all categories went out in one body with their nets, dogs, drums, flags etc. to ceremonially drive away and if possible catch birds that eat up paddy grains. The youths of a Dhumkuria had also got the responsibility to polish the Mandarsalas (two or more clay menhirs resembling

small pyramids). This structure existed in those villages in which Jatra was held. The day after the Poosh Jatra in some villages youths of the Dhumkuria used to entertain all the villagers to feast. On this occasion the elders discussed important affairs concerning the village.

Dhumkuria youths had an important part to play in creating good will between villages in the neighbourhood. They generally went out in batches and pay ceremonial visits to Dhumkuria in other villages. At the sound of a drum, the youths of other villages came out to welcome their guests and after exchange of greetings they danced together and fraternised with each other. They also entered into Sangi form of friendship. Next day they were feasted and at the time of their departure the flag or other emblem was handed over by the headman of the Dhumkuria to the leader of the guest party. This inter-village fraternisation of youth is called Bhaiyari.

Like the youths, the maidens of the girls dormitory had also certain privileges and duties. They wove palm leaf mats for themselves as well as for bachelors' dormitory. Besides this they had their own rituals which they performed in secrecy. On the occasion of a marriage in a village, the maidens took part in making arrangements for the feast. The maidens may also be hired out for sowing, transplanting or harvesting. Evidently even in the time of Sarat Chandra Roy, the maidens' dormitory was not a very active institution and could not compare with the youth dormitory in the efficiency of its organisation or the performances of its manifold functions.

For both the youths and the maidens the songs and dances appear to be the chief items in the ordinary programme of their night business. In summer and winter night, young people of both the sexes may be seen dancing in the village Akhara from evening till mid-night. On the occasion of important religious festivals like Phagu, Sohrai and Karam, dancing might continue night and day. The Dhangar Kotwar looked after the training of the youths of the lowest grade in the various styles of dancing and singing. Similarly the Barka Dhangrin took care to see that the young girls imitate the elder girls correctly in the various steps of dances of different tunes of the songs. Dances for various occasions, seasons and festivals differed in technique and

quality. Besides providing entertainment to the youths, maidens and the spectators, the daily programme of dance was interpreted by Roy to bring happiness, prosperity and stimulation of the healthful forces of nature so that the earth may be fruitful and the Oraon may be blessed with abundance of animals and vegetable food and the fertility of man and the rest of creation may increase. The dances and Jatra gathering may be said to be instrumental in fostering the tribal solidarity of the Oraon.

S. C. Roy does not give any definite data regarding the relations between the boys and the girls dormitories. He presumed that there would naturally be many attachments between boys and girls in every village, though he adds that, according to Oraon customs and rule, no girl may enter the youths dormitory and if the girls break this rule, the boys will temporarily lose their sight. Dalton writing in 1872 said that girls often found their way to the boys dormitory and in some villages actually slept there. After the dance it was not unusual for boys and girls to pair off. Dehon hated the dormitory because to him it was another name for promiscuity. The youngest boys of the Dhumkuria are sent by their older colleagues to get the latters' sweet hearts from the girls dormitory. Roy even believed that girls might be dragged by force and they may not resist. Generally the youths were expected to have favourites amongst the maidens. The wishes of the boys generally signified by his wearing particular flowers or any other thing which particular girl habitually wore. Illicit companionship of a boy and girl went on till one of them was married and sometimes until a child had been born to either of them. Such companionship seldom ended in marriage.

III

Verrier Elwin visited some Dhumkurias in Oraon villages in the eastern part of Ranchi district in 1940. In the villages the dormitory was housed in a well kept hut with a door but no windows. In Barambe he found well decorated pillars and beams in the dormitory. Stone pillars were found in Kota. In most of the dormitories he found village emblems, wooden images of elephants, horses, crocodiles and fish which are taken

out on the occasion of fairs and festivals. The preservation of these semi-sacred objects in the Dhumkuria was believed by Elwin to be the 'surest sign of the vitality of the institution.' The ceremonies mentioned by S. C. Roy prescribed for admission were not maintained everywhere. In one place Elwin was told that boys were admitted every year at the Sarhul festival when they had to bring certain offerings. Instead of meeting the Dhumkuria contribution in the form of Karanji, parents had to supply a lamp, a small earthen pot and enough oil to light the dormitory for a fortnight. In Mandar, Elwin was told that if a girl entered a youth dormitory she herself would get night blindness. W. G. Archer who was for a long time posted as Sub-Divisional Officer in Gumla Sub-Division, a predominantly Oraon area, did not find any Dhumkuria when he was working there in about 1940. In Jashpur, an area adjoining Gumla in Madhya Pradesh the Dhumkuria, was still surviving at that time though the public building had disappeared.

IV

During the past one year a number of Oraon villages were visited and the working of dormitories therein was observed. The facts revealed in this investigation showed that the Dhumkuria is no longer a distinguishing feature of all Oraon villages. It does not exist at all in the Gumla Sub-division in the form it is described by Sri S. C. Roy. In Khapia a joint dormitory for youths and maidens is found. It is known as *Jokh-Pelo Erpa*. It was not an independent building. In Chota Khapia it was located in the house of a widow and in Bara Khapia in another private house. Sleeping for youths and maidens in the dormitory is not compulsory and only those sleep there whose parents are indulgent enough to allow them to do so. A twelve year boy reported that he was forbidden by his parents to sleep in the dormitory though he was allowed to go to the dancing ground or the Akhra. In Chiri, 40 miles from Ranchi on the Ranchi-Lohardaga Road and the villages round about people had not even heard of the Dhumkuria though everywhere the Akhra exists. In Arangloya, three miles off the Ghaghra-Neterhat Road nobody had any knowledge of what a Dhumkuria is. This village is entirely composed of Oraons who are Bhagats. In Silpahari, a Christian village two miles from Chainpur, a Dhumkuria existed till three years back. There

were separate houses for boys and girls. Christian songs and prayers were sung there. Village elders closed this institution due to the affair of Telesphore and Christine. But for the last six months the youths have started sleeping in another house where they play cards, sing songs or religious hymns. Hockey sticks are kept there.

The most artistic Dhumkuria buildings were found in Barambe, Rani-Khatanga and Tangarbansli. In the first village there are two youth dormitories, one with a very artistic carved door and interior. This was the one which may have been visited by Elwin. It contained a number of flag poles, a few musical instruments and one village emblem, a wooden image of an elephant. In Rani-Khatanga also we find the sacred elephant which is taken to the Jatra with pomp and ceremony. In Mandar there was one big drum and three flutes. In one corner there was an oil crushing mechanism for crushing Karanj. It is no longer used now as a Kerosene lamp. On either side of the entrance of this dormitory is a small opening measuring 2 ft. by 1½ ft. which serves as window. There are three more windows in the building. There is a window in Tangarbansli and also in Barahiya Rol. In the latter case it has been opened by the Community Project authorities. The floor of the Dhumkuria is regularly polished with cow dung except in Barahiya Rol where the Project authorities have cemented it. In all other dormitories we found a slight depression in the floor which is used as a fire place to keep the hall warm in winter nights. Big logs of woods which are to be used as fuel are kept either in the building itself or in the verandah adjoining it. The youths sleep on palm leaf mats which were either spread on the floor or rolled up on one side.

Rules of membership have become lax. In Barambe Ahir and Lohra youths were also found sleeping in the Dhumkuria though in most cases only non-Christian Oraon youths are allowed to do so. In Rani Khatanga the total membership was 45 and the age range was 8 to 22. In addition to regular members known as Dhangars other people such as widowers, issueless married males, youngmen whose wives were on a visit to their parents, visitors from other villages and minor Govt. Officials also frequent at the Dhumkuria. Admission into the Dhumkuria takes place once in every three years just after the

Karam festival. The Dhangar Mahto announces the names of the boys who are to be admitted. Late at night, the youths of the seniormost age group visit all the houses from which a boy is to be admitted and place in front of every entrance a plough. When the parents of the young boys wake up in the morning they understand that the time for their admission has come. Youths of the lowest age grade collect eggs, oil and other catables from the village and the newly admitted boys are feasted. The seniormost youths lecture to them about their new responsibilities and privileges. The initiates are taken round the village and its organisation is explained to them.

The system of age grades in some of the Dhumkuria under observation is not maintained specially due to the fact that admission of members is not made regularly or properly. In Mandar it was observed that membership of the first two grades is decreasing fast. In Khapia though there is a Dhumkuria there is no system of age grades. In Rani Khatanga and Tanger Bansali however, three distinct age grades were observed. This conforms to the classifications mentioned by earlier observers. The first to arrive at the Dhumkuria in the evening are the members of the lowest age grade. They clean and sweep floor, spread mats and light the lamp. They then go back to their homes and return after meals. By this time members of the other age grades start arriving. During the rainy season and winter the members of the juniormost grade light the fire. It is the members of the intermediate grade who massage the bodies of the senior members. At Mandar I found that young boys do not like massaging the bodies of the older members. For negligence of this particular duty they are taken to task by the elders and this is one of the reasons why membership of the junior grades of the Dhumkuria is going down. It is at the time of the massage when the boys discuss the village affairs. After the massage all the inmates of the Dhumkuria go out to Akhra and the drums are sounded. This is a signal for inviting the girls for the dance. As soon as a good number of people arrive dancing begins and youths and maidens continue to join even after the dance is begun. After the dance which generally lasts till the mid-night, the boys and girls disperse, to their respective dormitories. Now-a-days dancing does not take place daily but on the alternate days except during the time they are having their festivals. After the dance they retire to sleep. The

Dhumkuria building is also used in the day specially in the afternoon, if any youth wants to take a short nap.

No formal relation exists between the boys and girls dormitories except for the making of palm-leaf mats by the maidens for the youth dormitories. Girls do not visit boys in their dormitory but the members of the seniormost grade of the youth dormitory take out the girls of their choice from the girls' dormitory. For this they used the services of boys of the youngest age grade. It was also observed that secret meetings between youths and maidens at night was not secret and it was viewed kindly by the parents and elders in the village. Only in case the girl becomes pregnant the matter comes to the head and the defaulting families have to pay a fine. Nothing could be easier than a marriage between the defaulting couple if they belong to two different clans but in case they belong to the same clan they could under no circumstances be allowed to marry.

In one of the youth dormitories the investigator was told that the Dhumkuria trained its inmates to keep the interest of the community under-most in their minds. In Malti, Mandar, Barambe, Rani Khatanga, and Tangarbansli *Pacha* service still continues. The money received is deposited with the Dhangar Mahto who utilises it for the benefit of the Dhumkuria. The members of the highest age grade provide the much needed leadership to the boys of the two other age grade. In Jatra and festivals the senior members see that the young boys take part in the dance and act as a well disciplined group. It seems that at present the only important function of the Dhumkuria is to arrange for the instruction of generation of Oraon boys and girls in the intricacies of different kinds of songs and dance. In Mandar, however ; the election of the Dhangar Mahto and Kotwar had not taken place for the last five or six years. Two middle aged persons were holding offices of the Mahto and Kotwar respectively. Discipline had become lax and nobody is particular about the wearing of ceremonial dress at the time of dance. No hunting expeditions are now organised and the greed of money has upset whole idea of co-operation. Other functions which have been mentioned by S. C. Roy have now become obsolete. Even if attendance in the dance is not satisfactory no one takes care.

The same is the case with the women's dormitory. Even in S. C. Roy's account this dormitory seems to have been rather weak in organisation as compared to its male counterpart. *Pacha* service is maintained in some villages for the girls also. They continue to help in wedding feasts.

V.

From the above account it becomes evident that the institution of the youths dormitory among the Oraon is in a process of decay and disintegration. The first stage was when the Dhumkuria lost its own building for some reason or the other youths began to sleep in a part of some body's empty house. In village Belangi, the Dhumkuria has been in disuse for the last two or three years. Last year its roof was blown away by wind and its pillars and other things have been eaten by white-ants. Some other building material was taken away by the villagers for being used as fuel. On inquiry it was found that the Dhumkuria was not repaired due to the existence of feuds in the village. The two sections of this village have been bitterly critical of each other's activities and even though one of them wants to repair the Dhumkuria, the other party is bent upon hindering it. Some of the people interviewed considered the decay of the Dhumkuria, to be bad as henceforth guests of the village have no place to stay in, and no body would be able to look after their comforts. Nor would needy people be helped during the time of marriage and the agricultural season.

Two important reasons for the decay of the Dhumkuria has been the propaganda carried on by the Church and Social Welfare Workers. It has already been hinted above that as soon as an Oraon is converted, he ceases to attend the Dhumkuria and even if he wishes to continue as a member, he would not be admitted therein In village Malti the Christian youths have built a separate Dhumkuria which has got the same type of organisation as the traditional one and Christian youths participate in all communal activities of the village except in the rituals. They have a separate *Pacha* service as they have their own exceptional case because among most converted Oraons, the Dhumkuria is not found at all. The Missionaries considered it to be a by-name for immorality and the converts were forbidden to have anything to do with the Dhumkuria. The estab-

lishment of schools in villages also seems to have adversely affected the Dhumkuria. In many villages the author was told that the dormitories were doing immense harm to their morality. Young girls after marriage did not like to leave their parents' village and even if they go there they continually keep running off. This phenomenon is related by many school-going Oraons, to the lure of the village dormitory and dancing ground. It is believed that dancing leads to romance and every marriageable girl is involved in some romance in their parental village. The freedom to dance does not exist for newly married bride in her husband's village but so long as she remains with her parents she can continue to attend her own dormitory and *Akhra*. In villages where schools have been established, most of the children going to school do not go to the Dhumkuria, as they do not get much time to do their home work if they go there. In Rani Khatanga parents do not send their sons to Dhumkuria and even paid fine for absence as they were all school-going boys. Young school-going children do not want to run errands for uneducated senior boys and the task of massaging somebody else's leg is greatly hated. Even in those villages where the Dhumkuria exists the elders admit the continual decline in strength. Night schools opened as in Social Education Centres have become a serious rival of the Dhumkuria.

It is evident that the function of the Dhumkuria as the only mechanism for the instruction of tribal youth cannot be maintained now. Schools are being opened in almost all the villages and these must take up some of the functions of the Dhumkuria. Whenever the Dhumkuria exists it has three important functions (a) as a sleeping house, (b) as a school of dancing and music and (c) as providing a co-operative labour unit by requisition of any needy member of the village. It is highly desirable that efforts should be made to retain the last two functions of youth dormitory even if its use as a sleeping house may, in the long run, be given up. To my mind, whenever the institution exists it may be used as a Social Education Centre and the latter should, under no circumstances, act as rival of the traditional tribal institution. It may, therefore, be advisable to start Social Education Centres in the building of Dhumkuria where they exist and it might function as a literary wing to the traditional institution. Likewise, the Dhumkuria may come in handy for extension workers, anxious to organise youth clubs. In the

villages where institutions are disappearing or tottering, efforts should be made to revive it and invest it with new functions. It is expected that tribal people would respond more readily to work done through their own institutions and would feel pride in rejuvinating their tribal institution which may thus be refashioned according to the needs of the times.

An effort in this direction has already been made by Shri Julius Tigga, the founder of the Kanke Dhumkuria School. Shri Tigga, who is not only an exponent of Oraon songs and dances but a singer and dancer himself, has taken great pains to rejuvinate Dhumkuria by giving it some additional functions and taking away one or two original functions. In this institution great prominence is given to the teaching of Oraon songs and dance and some of the instruction at the lower level is also given through the medium of dance and drama.

It is evident that the function of the Dhumkuria where they exist, should be wisely supported and not decried and where they do not exist they should be restarted with the functions suggested above.

THE MORUNG AND THE DHUMKURIA
A STUDY IN CONTRAST

Youth dormitories and Community houses among the tribal societies in India have attracted the attention and interest of anthropologists ever since the publication of the earliest account of the Nagas' great bachelor halls and the Oraon youth dormitories. The Naga Morung was first mentioned in a passage in John Butler's 'A Sketch of Assam' (London, 1847). This was followed three decades later by a far more detailed description of the community houses of Konyak Naga men and girls by S. E. Peal. In 1872, Dalton described the Oraon youth dormitory in his *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal.* Peal drew attention to the fact that from 'Bhutan to New Zealand and from Marquesas to Nigar' the system of youth dormitories and community houses existed and was distinguished by certain persistent features.

We see in all, except among the nomadic Australians, that there is a special and recognized building or buildings for the unmarried young men and lads to sleep in and at times for young women, also in many cases together. We notice that among races having barracks, without exception there is complete liberty between the sexes until marriage. In fact chastity is a postmarital affair. These barracks are taboo to the married women whether the race of tribe is exogamic or endogamic. In societies where we have such dormitories adult marriage is the rule and strangely enough conjugal fidelity seems greater than among the more civilised people by whom pre-marital chastity is prized.

A brief review of the working of the Naga Morung will help to put some of the features of the Oraon youth dormitory in bold relief. "There is no doubt", writes Prof. C. von Furer-Haimendorf, "that the men's house system is a very ancient institution. The role which the Morung plays in the village of the Konyak Nagas shows how deeply it is rooted in their social organization, and since the Konyaks seem to represent an older type of Naga culture than any of the other tribes, it appears

most probable that Morung belongs together with the log drum to the oldest stratum of the Naga Hills."[1]

Raids are planned and discussed in the Lhota Naga dormitory called Champo. All heads taken in war were first brought to the Champo and it was there that prisoners of war were detained. The interior of the buildings was far from being pleasant. It is, 'dark, dirty, smoky, stuffy and full of fleas'[2] a strange contrast with the clean and well kept interior of the Oraon Dhumkuria. Among the Ao Nagas, the Morung is both a guard house and a club house and plays an important part in the social life of the village. In Rengma villages the Morung is the store house of shields, spears and daos. It is also a sanctuary where no criminal can be touched. No crime can be committed inside a Morung. Any property can be left safely in it as to steal from there is taboo.

Konyak Naga Morungs are of two kinds : Thenkoh and Thendu, which differ in the mode of construction as well as the influence they command in the village. It faces an open space used for dancing or as a play ground for boys. The floor of the central room is covered by big stamping boards. On either side of the hall lie the sleeping apartments partitioned off only by thin bamboo mats that rarely reach up to the roof. These compartments are pitch dark. Behind the central hall there is a narrow gallery with a semi-circular platform erected on high piles. The platform is covered by a roof from which one can have an excellent view of the country below. This is a nice place for the defence of the village. Thendu Morung on the other hand have a closed front and are more like a large individual house. Such Morung are overshadowed by the house of the Ang or the chief.

Only very small villages have only one Morung. Villages having forty to fifty houses have two. Bigger villages have three to six. Haimendorf reports that one village had eleven Morung. Each Morung corresponds to one Khel or hamlet of a village. In Thenkoh villages the Morung is an exogamous unit. The

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1. The Morung System of the Konyak Nagas, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 1938, P. 349.
2. J. P. Mills : Ao Nagas, London, P. 24.

horror of incest in a Morung is in addition to clan exogamy. Sometimes Morungs form groups which are exogamous. An exception to the rule of Morung exogamy is provided in the case of people who have themselves come from other villages of whose ancestors were immigrants. They may freely intermarry with the inmates of the Morung under the aegis of which they have settled. In the Thendu group Morung exogamy is cut across by class exogamy.

In the Thenkoh group of villages where there is not a strong chief in each village, the affairs of a village are managed by a council consisting of an ordinary chief and some Niengba or representatives from each Morung. Thus council settles disputes and imposes fines for crimes and breaking of taboos. Though the accused is fined the plaintiff does not get any compensation. This checks unnecessary litigation. It is the Niengba who consult omens before new fields are selected for the shifting cultivation. They announce the date of the village *genna* when all work is prohibited. One Niengba performs the initiation ceremony for boys entering the Morung. In Thendu villages there are no Niengba and the duties of the Council are carried on by the adult members of the Ang or chiefly clan. There is an Ang in each Morung in such villages. He claims a share of all animals killed at certain ceremonies and is entitled to the work of Morung members on his fields but does not officiate at ceremonies nor does he settle disputes.

The initiation ceremony in a Konyak Naga Morung embodies the notion of a successful head hunting raid in the form of a ceremonial chant. The keynote of the initiation rite is to make the boys in a magical way fit for war and head hunting. Rivalry between Morung is a common feature in villages not ruled by a powerful chief. It may even result in the outbreak of open hostility between two inter-marrying Morung. Early in the present century Bala and Thepong Morung of village Wakching fell out. In dealing with its neighbours a village seldom acts as a whole. In the sphere of foreign relations, it is the Morung and not the village that is the political unit. A Morung in one village may keep other Morung or villages in a status of subordination to it. Tributes are payable to a Morung from villages subordinate to it. One Morung of village Wakching had eleven villages under its overlordship. The land in

the tributory villages is theoretically owned by the Morung concerned. There is a curious situation when villages have obligations towards two overlords who are not friendly. Similarly there are parts of alliance between a Morung and other villages. A Morung which is on friendly terms with two Morung of a neighbouring village may be simultaneously at war with two other Morung of the same village. An independent policy by the Morung is confined to villages without strong autocratic chiefs. Thus in democratic villages some of the duties of the chief are performed by the Morung.

A well established system of reciprocity regulates the economic role of the Morung. Inter-marrying Morungs are generally on most friendly terms. The girl may ask her lover to come over with some friends to work in the fields of her father. Next day the girl returns the services with some of her friends. This system is not only an excellent remedy for the dullness of agricultural work but stimulates young people to greater effort, for no man likes to be considered a poor worker. In each of the Morung area, there is a girl's dormitory built as an annexe to some one's house. They are visited by boys, but few girls sleep in the Yo as smaller girls sleep in their parent's house and bigger girls prefer to go with lovers to granaries. A couple may also spend a night in a Yo. A Yo is never built by the men of the Morung in whose area it stands. It is erected by the men of the Morung who are the potential mates for the girls. There may be quarrel between Morung boys and girls about receiving boys from some other Morung. Any break in the system of reciprocity affects not only the relations between members of the two groups but also their attitude towards other members of the community.

Admission of a boy into the Morung does not mean severing the ties with the parental family. Throughout life the family or the household remains the dominant economic unit. Though the Morung absorbs much of man's social and political energies there is no conflict between a man's loyalty to his Morung and his obligations to his family. Family and Morung satisfy different social needs. Economically the Morung does not encroach on the family's function as the primary economic and social unit, but in the political field the Morung may usurp the importance of a village

"The Morung is a centre of village life and the pillar of Konyak social and political organization. It regulates the relation of every man and woman with the members of the community and forms a framework for the numerous obligations between individuals and groups. It strengthens the sense of social unity developing in the boys of the Morung a strong espirit de corps and at the same time encourages competition between the Morung thus stimulating the activities of the whole village."[1]

The Dhumkuria or the boys' dormitory does not exist in all the Oraon regions, but is found in some form or the other in a few areas. The Dhumkuria building where it exists is a modest house generally with four mud walls, one doorway and no windows. Though situated in a prominent part of the village it is not found at the entrance to a village. In most cases the building overlooks a beautifully kept dancing ground sometimes surrounded with stone seats.

The supervision and control of the Dhumkuria is not in the hands of full grown adults but in that of a *Dhangar Mahto* who is elected from among the senior members of the dormitory. He has to instruct the boys in their social and religious duties. He is helped in his duties by a deputy called Kotwar. These officers are appointed after a consultation between the village headman and the elders for a period of three years. Offences committed by members of the Dhumkuria are punished by the *Dhangar Mahto* and if he feels perplexed as to what to do in any matter the village headman may be consulted. So training in discipline of the Dhumkuria boys is conducted by its own officers under the benign care of the village elders. Unlike the Konyak Naga Morung it is powerless to deal with disputes in the village at large nor does it play a part in the governance of the village in general.

The Dhumkuria is the only seminary for formal instruction among the Oraons.[2] Its main social function is the training of

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1. Haimendorf : Ibid.

2. Under the impact of culture contact the primary function of the Dhumkuria as a sleeping house for the youth has been lost sight of in case of the Dhumkuria School run at Kanke (Ranchi) by Shri Julius Tiga. Shri Tiga has emphasised the educational role of the Dhumkuria and gives full fledged instruction in traditional Oraon values as well as other subjects through the medium of dance, drama and music.

youth in music and dancing and in the traditional love of the Oraons. The Dhumkuria officials see to it that all its members receive adequate lessons in dancing and come up to the required standard. Not only these young men are trained in social and other duties, such as looking after guests who come from other villages. These are often made to stay in the Dhumkuria, a fact which has led some superficial observers to compare it to a Dak Bungalow. When there is a wedding or any other feast in the village, it is the youth of the Dhumkuria who have to dress the animals and fowls killed for the occasion and act as cooks and look after the comforts of the guests. Dhumkuria boys of the Raja village have the duty of distributing meat purchased from fines levied by the Parha in the villages of the Parha. Such functions are not assigned to the Naga Morung whose hardy discipline is particularly oriented to the need of the areas which are in constant insecurity and political unrest. While the Dhumkuria aids the work of the village elders, thus giving the boys a chance for handling responsibilities, the Naga Morung is a rival of the village political organization and some times overshadows the importance of the latter. The Dhumkuria has no political pretensions. The Morung on the other hand is a powerful political organization.

Dhumkuria youth have to perform a number of magico-religious observances calculated to secure success in hunting and to augment the procreative power of youngmen, so as to increase the number of hunters in the tribe. Certain fertility ceremonies are included in the worship performed by the Dhangar Mahto at the shrine of Chandi, the goddess of hunting and war. Boys have to collect fuel for the fire that keeps the dormitory warm and gather mahua flowers from which to distil the liquor which is drunk in the dormitory. On a fixed day every year the boys set out to catch and drive away birds which injure the rice crops. Similarly they have to drive away the spirit that causes the cattle disease. Dhumkuria boys are also active in cementing inter-village alliances of friendship. They go to other villages in a body and receive similar visits from other Dhumkurias. They exchange greetings, feast and dance together and individual boys enter ceremonial friendship pacts called Sangi with the dormitory boys of other villages.[1] Through all these acts

1. On such occasions the formal present of the flag of the village is made to the visitors. Thus the Dhumkuria acts on behalf of the entire village.

the Dhumkuria knits the village into one social unit. The Naga Morungs on the other hand are instrumental in fostering a spirit of rivalry between themselves and sometimes this may lead to hostilities.

The youth of an Oraon village united under the dormitory have to take active part in the ceremonial hunts. Before the inception of the Spring hunt the boy priest of the goddess Chandi propitiates the deity and beseeches her aid for success. In the Summer hunt which is an inter-Parha affair, the youths of the dormitory have to make all arrangements. In this way they imbibe team spirit and learn to work as a corporate entity for common good. A team of youths from the Dhumkuria may be hired for work in someone else's field and the wages thus earned are spent for the purchase of musical instruments for the dormitory. The maidens of the Oraon girl's dormitory have every year to plait a strip of palm-leaf mat about six inches wide and as long as the length of the youth's dormitory hall. There is also a ceremonial presentation of barley shoots by the girls to the boys. Many attachments develop between the youths and girls but this is not channelised into the form or reciprocity as among the Naga Morung and Yo girl's dormitory.

Both the Naga Morung and the Oraon Dhumkuria possess the features of youth dormitories and community houses all over the world. But they differ in many respects. They differ in location and look. In the matter of supervision and control the Morung is more under the thumb of politicians while the Dhumkuria is a school for administrative training. The Morung is distinct from the village unit in political affairs and sometimes even becomes a rival and at other carry on the normal routine of village administration while the Dhumkuria can at best look upto elders of the village for help and guidance. In social affairs the Dhumkuria acts for the entire village and knits together the local population. Contrary to this different Morung in one village wreck its social and political unity and make it an open arena for the free play of competition and rivalry. Imparting of training in dance and music and development of aesthetic sensibility of the people as well as the transmission of tribal mores and tradition is the responsibility of the Dhumkuria. Married and grown up men have no place in its body politic. The Naga Morung is at once a Council house of the

village, a club house and a military guard house wherein the mature grown up adults have as much importance as the youths who sleep there at night. In short while the Dhumkuria is essentially a kingdom of the unmarried, a youth dormitory ; the Morung is a Community house par excellence. These striking difference between institutions which have been placed in the same species by Peal rouse a suspicion that they may be different in origin.

WOMEN IN MUNDA SOCIETY

It is commonly supposed that the position of women in a patrilineal society is very low. This contention is not borne out among the Munda. The Munda are a settled agricultural tribe of Chotanagpur. They are patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal, but among them women enjoy the rightful status of being equal partners of their menfolk.

There is a rough division of labour between men and women. Difficult and strenuous work is not entrusted to women. They perform light but monotonous jobs. They are full collaborators with men in economic activities. In fact their work supplements the work of men. They break clods of earth with men, help in sowing broadcast or transplanting paddy seedlings. Weeding is almost entirely their work. When the crop has ripened, they harvest it. Besides this they are busy with household work. They leave the bed before men, plaster the floor with cowdung, wash the cooking and eating utensils and then cook meals for the entire family. If there are many women in the household, they divide the work between themselves. Some clean the house, some wash the animals, some bring water from the well, spring or stream. When meals are ready, they take them for their men in the field. They always eat after men. In the afternoon they work with men in the fields according to the directions of the latter.

When there is no work in the fields or in the barn, they spin cotton on home made spinning wheel. 'Tisin' is used to clean the cotton. In the Khunti area spinning is not so common as in Panch Parganas. When they are free, some women grow vegetables in the kitchen-garden attached to every house. After harvesting women bring paddy home, thresh it and then pound it with Dheki. Old women collect grass and sell it in the neighbouring market for three to four annas per head load. Some buy mustard seeds, extract oil form it and sell it. Though almost all Munda families have got some land, it is not enough to make both their ends meet. Hence in the slack agricultural season their main occupation is sale of grass and firewood.

Even though the return they get for their enormous labour is meagre they look satisfied and cheerful.

Some poor Munda women agree to work as domestics in the house of a well-to-do member of their own community. They serve till harvest time. Such women labourers are employed only in such houses where the number of women to shoulder the work is not adequate. In such houses they are not treated just as servants but as poor and needy relations. They can serve in such positions from the age of twelve to the date of marriage. They may serve either in the house or in the field. Every year at the harvest time they get a new set of clothes and some cash from their employers.

Munda girls do not like to serve in non-Munda households. Only some unfortunate girls come to the town and forced by circumstances serve in the houses of non-tribals. There they get more than their expectation. Orphan girls impelled by hunger and scorn in the village take up such jobs. Those whose parents are alive serve with relatives only. Their main objective being helping a family in straightened circumstances. Those women working permanently as maid-servants are generally widows. They daily go to their master's house and do specified jobs such as sweeping the house, washing utensils and fetching water. In some Hindu families in the town such maid-servants are usually found. They do not stay at night in their master's house. Sometimes they have to walk many miles from their place of work to their home. Even in wealthy Munda family it is not customary to keep female domestics. All work is done by the women in the family themselves.

Inspite of such busy routine Munda women are happy and gay. They are free from 'Purda'. Their sphere of activity is not only the home but extends to the agricultural field and forest. They can mix with all sorts of people and talk with them. There are regular dances at the village Akhra. Boys and girls assemble for the dance which begin after dinner almost every night. There are several styles of dancing, each accompanied by its characteristic songs. They reflect their love for nature, their joys and sorrows and are full of emotion and gaiety. The dance begins with a few drummers and dancers. The beat

of the drums beckons girls who flock from different corners of the village and soon the dance assumes gigantic proportions. Many a bond of love is forged in the dancing ground. Some of them may finally lead to more permanent union in the form of marriage but most of them end otherwise due to rules of clan and village exogamy. The dances are, however, held in the presence of elders who see to it that they are performed according to traditional rules and do not cross the bounds of decency.

Munda women maintain jocking relationship with some members of their family and outside. They can cut jokes with the husband's younger brother or with the elder brother's wife. She has to maintain distance from the husband's elder brother with whom all types of contact are forbidden. With the two types of relations mentioned above she can indulge in sexual jokes also. They can touch each other but caressing of private parts are prohibited. Between a person and his wife's younger sister joking relation prevails. It also subsists between the grandmother and grandson.

In old age women spend most of their time in looking after their grandchildren. When the parents of the children are busy in the field they take care of them. Though they get nothing for this work they feel great pleasure in it. In marriages, festivals and other occasions old women participate fully in gaiety and mirth, take part in dancing and drink Hanria, the popular native drink of the Munda. Forgetting the pains of old age they identify themselves completely with the youngsters. Unless they are incapacitated, they keep themselves busy in some useful activity. As they are repositories of tribal usage, other women hold them in high esteem and in difficulty seek their advice and guidance.

Most of the rituals are performed by men. But in some festivals women have the right of participating in the ceremonies. Eight days before the Karam festival four or five maidens raise a special type of maize seedlings. This is called Jaoa Akid. Each maiden puts maize seeds in the earth put in a new basket. The basket is kept inside a house and everyday it is watered with turmeric water. This is called Jiara. When seedlings appear their colour is yellow due to the action of turmeric. On the day of the Karam feast these maidens have to observe fast. In

Orakaram youths are invited and in the evening they proceed to cut a Karam sapling along with the maidens. The girls take the saplings in their arms as they are cut from the tree and do not allow them to fall on the ground. The saplings are brought on the shoulders of the girls. They carry the saplings in the same way as a soldier carries his gun. At the sound of the drum boys and girls return to the village dancing and the sapling is planted at the *Akhra* with great singing and rejoicing. Similarly in Hatu Karam women have to perform other rituals.

Munda women take part in many a ritual. In those villages where the Pahan or the village priest performs all the rituals. Women worship the ancestral spirits in the *Ading*. This ritual is strange as the Munda were at no time matriarchal. There is a story behind this ritual. Once when all preparations had been made for worship at the *Ading* the head of the family received information that his bullocks were lost in the forest. He at once set out on the search of these bullocks. He remained out for long and in the meanwhile the children who had been fasting for the worship began to weep due to hunger. Seeing the children impatient the mother herself performed the worship. From that day any one father or mother can worship at the *Ading*. If a person dies before his children come of age, his widow performs the worship of the ancestral spirits till such time as the oldest child can do it. In the lifetime of her husband, no women can perform the rituals. On that occasion if a person has indulged in sexual intercourse one day prior to the festival, he cannot take part in it.

All the women of the village assemble at its entrance with pitchers. When the procession comes that way they wash the feet of the Pahan and his assistant. In those villages where there is no fixed place for dancing, the youths and maidens dance near the house of the Pahan. Generally Munda women participate in all social ceremonials. They are not prohibited from attending festivals and religious rites. Though men officiate at most of the rituals, in some of them the position of women is higher than that of men. Thus we find that women are of no mean importance in society. On all special occasions they have to do this or that. Many acts connected with worship is allotted to them. If worship is to be performed at a particular place the

wife of the Pahan or any other married woman on his bidding plasters the place with cowdung. As soon as the Pahan's assistant prepares the meals for dinner, women bring pitchers of the native drink *Hanria*. Every woman gives some drink to the Pahan and his assistant. The cooked meal is served to other people present there. Women are not allowed to eat the sacrificial meat.

Munda society is patrilineal. So in some aspects women's rights are smaller than that of men. In economic activities she helps menfolk in all ways, but her economic rights are definitely less than that of men. She is the owner of her clothes, a few cheap ornaments and something of daily use. Women cannot inherit property. When a person dies, his property is divided between his widow and sons. A portion of land is set apart for the maintenance of the widow. If the deceased left some cash, Rupees twenty may be kept for her. She enjoys life interest in the land allotted to her. She cannot sell it nor can she mortage it to some one else. If she lives apart from her sons and is in no way dependent upon them, after her death the property will be equally partitioned between her sons. But generally a widow lives with one of her sons who looks after her land and is in fact its owner. In these circumstances, on the death of the mother, the son with whom she lived gets all her land.

If the deceased did not have a son but only daughters, the widow can sell off some moveable property and other household articles in case of necessity. She can also mortgage her land for a fixed period. But she has no right to sell land without the consent of her husband's relatives. If the widow leaves the village of her deceased husband and begins to live with her parents or brother, she has no rights over the income from her lands which reverts to the consanguineal relatives of her husband. If she remarries, she has no right over the moveable or immovable property of her husband. She can take with herself only her ornaments and ordinary dresses.

Daughters cannot inherit property. Brother cannot set apart any property for their sister. But the brothers have to maintain the sister till her marriage. An unmarried daughter can live with any one of her brothers at her sweet will. That

brother is usually given a larger share of the property by the Panchayat. After the marriage of the sister this land is equally divided between all the brothers. The bride price which the sister receives is given to the brother who had supported her and who meets the expenses of the marriage. The son-in-law or his children have no rights over property. I have come across only one case in which a girl after the death of her father inherited his property. She was the only child of her parents and served them till their last days. So the father made a will of his property to the daughter. His relations were not in favour of giving the property to the daughter but with the aid of the court she could get the property.

Generally, there is no prostitution in Munda society, though one or two examples have been found as exceptions. There is no word in Mundari for this and as a matter of fact such women are not found among them. One woman near Burju was following this profession. She has been excommunicated from Munda fold. If any Munda comes into contact with her or even accepts water at her hands he will be outcasted. This is the only example in my experience. A widow who remains in her huaband's village can never become a prostitute. If some illicit relations develop between her and some other person and the villagers come to know of it, that person is compelled to marry her.

In former days Munda girls were married when they had attained puberty and generally they chose their own partners. Due to culture contact with Hindus the age of marriage has been reduced and parents arrange the marriage of their daughters. Such marriages have the highest approbation of society as the Hindu marriage is their ideal. Nevertheless marriages of other kinds are also prevalent. These have social approval and in them boys and girls have freedom in the choice of partners. In marriage by captue, Raji Khushi, intrusion marriage, marriage by service or by exchange and in Sagai marriage the consent of parents is received afterwards. Some bride price may also be paid later.

Divorce or separation betwewen married couples is prevalent in Munda-society. The number of divorces is not large

and it is looked upon as a disgrace. When a couple do not get along amicably and quarrels are rampant, villagers try to bring them together and if the wife flees to her parents' place she is brought back. If she flees habitually, divorce is granted. Divorce can be permitted only by the panchayat. The panchs decide on a party's guilt and if the woman is adjudged guilty, her father has to pay back a portion of the bride-price. The divorcee can remarry. The right of divorce is enjoyed equally by both husband and wife.

It is incorrect to hold that sons are more desired among Munda than daughters. From the point of view of the family a son is important. He remains in the family to perpetuate the family line. The parents in old age lean on them and even on death hope that sons will worship them as ancestors. The daughter does not contribute any things in this regard. On marriage, she leaves not only the family, but the village and the clan. All the links that count so much in Munda society are severed. For her parents' family she dies and is reborn into her husband's family with full rights. For this reason too she does not get any share out of her father's property. In the husband's family she has all the rights belonging to a person born into that family. But inspite of these things daughters are not looked down upon in their parent's home. The mother receives adequate help from her adult daughters before marriage and even after so long as she does not leave for husband's home. For these reasons many a Munda mother desire daughters. It is the daughters for which they receive bride price with which they can hope to marry their own sons. In families where there are no daughters it is difficult to procure bride price and boys may have to remain unmarried for long. So far the well being of the family it is necessary to have daughters.

Munda women have got an important voice in matters concerning the home. Their influence is strong in the rearing of children. It is she who takes the surplus grain to the *hat* for sale. Before marriage she can mix with the opposite sex with such freedom as may be available to the most progressive societies in other parts of India. In her own home a Munda woman is not totally dependent upon her husband as she has an income of her own by selling certain goods in the market In the social

life of the village, in the recreation in the village *akhra,* in dance and song, in fields or farms, in fairs and festivals she has a place of her own. Only in the rituals of worship her place is slightly inferior. In the political field she cannot be a member of the panchayat but can present her views before it in case of necessity. Due to their inferiority in civic and religious spheres, they do not have a feeling of being suppressed or depressed. They realise their own importance in society but do not become rivals of menfolk. They pride in supplementing the work of men.

Oraon woman weaving a mat.

ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION IN TRIBAL BIHAR

One of the most striking aspects of primitive labour is the co-operation which characterizes it. Co-operative work is done by groups of all sizes and comprehends all kinds of tasks. It is obvious that the family, the primary social unit in every society, must be a co-operative institution. The community as a whole can equally be regarded as a co-operative unit, for were it not so, it would not survive. In this paper we would refer only to that sort of co operation which acts as a factor in furthering the productive processes, i.e., the voluntary association of a group of men and women whose objective is the completion of a specific, definitely limited task with which they are simultaneously concerned.

Despite the disintegrating influences of the modern machine age which threaten village economy, the tribal village in Bihar still maintains its traditional way of life, and co-operation in economic undertakings regulates economic relations in the village to a considerable extent. Co-operative work may be classified according to its range into three classes, namely, family group co-operation, local group or village co-operation, and the wider co-operative group consisting of an entire neighbourhood. The kind of economic endeavour differs in each class. The following table illustrates this.

Family unit	*Local group unit*	*Neighbourhood group*
Ploughing	Weeding	
Sowing	Transplanting	
Harvesting		
Watching the crop	Watching the crop	
	Fishing	Fishing
	Hunting	Hunting
House building		
Basket making	Minor irrigation	
Collection of lac	works, building	
Rearing of tusser-silk worms	embankments etc.	
Cattle herding		

Agricultural work is shared by the entire family, though the different operations are assigned to different members. Ploughing is taboo for women among the Oraon and the Kharia, while watching of crops is done by men of the family among the Oraon, Munda, Kharia and the Santal ; but among the Ho, villagers take turns in watching the standing crops of the village fields at night. Weeding and transplanting is done by women of the entire village as a co-operative unit among all the tribes. The spirit of team work relieves the monotony of such undertakings and the rhythm of work is maintained by songs. Any outsider visiting the tribal area during these operations cannot but be impressed by the organized and disciplined co-operative work.

In Oraon areas, where the youth dormitories still play an important role, the boys of the Dhumkuria (boys' dormitory) act as a corporate body and help in the preparation of a wedding or any other feast in the village. They act as cooks and look after the comforts of visitors, who and generally housed in their dormitory. If a villager is in need of the services of workmen in the fields or for thatching a house, he applies to the dormitory headman who strikes a bargain with him. The wages received are generally spent in the purchase of musical instruments for the dormitory. Members of the girls' dormitory may also be requisitioned for work likewise. In both these cases, it may also be noted that co-operation is not voluntary but incumbent on the youths and girls by reason of their membership of the dormitories. This type of labour is known as *Pacha* labour.

House building, basket making, collection of lac, rearing of tusser-silk worms and cattle herding is the work of the family unit.

Among the Oraon, Santal and Ho fishing is a co-operative undertaking in which all the families of an entire village or neighbourhood participate. The Oraons go on fishing expeditions annually two or three days before the Sarhul festival in the month of April—May. All the young bachelors of the village go to fish together in a tank or a stream. The fish distributed among all the Oraon families of the village. One

member from every family takes home the share, and even those families which are formed only of women and children and have sent no male member to the fishing expedition, get a share.

Among the Ho fishing is well organized on co-operative lines. Though people from a village and even beyond assemble at one pond or stream, they form separate fishing groups, each of which undertakes its own operations and divides the catch within the group. There is a spirit of healthy rivalry between village groups in a fishing expedition. The owner of the pond, whether he joins in the fishing or not, gets a half-share in the entire catch. He may, if he likes, distribute his share among those of his co-villagers who have helped him in the organization of the expedition, but the rest of the fish is distributed among members of the various groups. If there are four members of one family in a group they receive four shares. Disputes about the distribution of the catch are settled by the owner of the pond, whose verdict is seldom challenged. Women who go with their husbands or brothers extend their help to the group as a whole (though assistance is generally confined to the village or the clan) and are entitled to a share in the group's catch. When a woman only assists her husband or relative and does not identify herself with the group as a whole she does not receive any share when the distribution takes place. This is evidently a triumph of group loyalty over faimly loyalty.

Co-operative effort is clearly evident in hunting among the various tribes. Even among the Uthlu Birhors who are hunters and collectors, monkey catching which is their major occupation is conducted jointly by the adult members of the entire settlement called the Tanda, the game being shared by all the families participating. Before starting on the hunt, the Naya or the village headman invokes all the spirits by name in front of the hunting nets and prays for success in the hunt. The hunting expedition is organized by the village elders and the population of the entire village acts as corporate unit. People of several villages in the neighbourhood co-operate in the annual hunt called the Disum Sendra (regio-hunt). This is a striking instance of inter-village co-operation in a tribe which stands on a low level of economic development.

The Oraon hold three great hunting expeditions every year called the Bisu Sendra, the Phagu Sendra and the Jeth Shikar. All these hunts are important occasions and are not only the concern of the individual hunter working with his family but necessitate the co-operation of the entire village and at times of several villages in the neighbourhood. Such hunting expeditions have a recognized leader chosen for the occasion from among the senior people in the village. Each hunter gets an equal share of the game brought down; dogs participating get a share equal to that of a man, but young boys who join in the hunt get only half a share. The man who shoots an animal is entitled to two shares, one for having killed the animal and the other as a villager and mem ber of the hunt.

The chief hunt of the year is the summer hunt, information about which is circulated by the Parha Raja (head of a group of villages called a Parha) on the preceding market day in the surrounding villages. All the animals and fowl killed by the hunters are divided equally between the villages of the Parha irrespective of their respective effort. Before the returning hunters enter the village, they divide the village's share between members of the families resident therein. Families who have been unable to take part in the hunt are also given a share. In this case therefore effective contribution in the economic effort is not the only qualification for getting a share in the returns.

Among the Santal the annual summer hunt is an occasion for a vast concourse of hunters from different villages not necessarily of the same Pargana or group of villages. The leader of the hunt is called the Dihri. As each animal falls, the name of the village to which the hunter belonged is called out and at the end of the day the bag is divided according to well-recognized custom. This practice emphasizes and applauds the contribution of each constituent unit in the joint co-operative effort. This occasion is also used for the meeting of the hunt council which is the highest traditional judicial body of the Santals.

Co-operative work must be distinguished from joint work.

In some other activities there is the idea of cohesion and of common interest between units forming a group as well as between two or more groups following that occupation, of participating in the same kind of undertaking. When people go fishing or collecting firewood, cutting bamboos or felling trees they work with a common interest. But actually each family unit works with its own tools and claims the fruits of its own labour. Here lies the difference between co-operative work and joint work.

PROBLEMS OF TRIBAL ECONOMY IN BIHAR

Economy is a comprehensive term. It affects our lives from the cradle to the grave. It nas become specially important in view of the many welfare programmes put in operation in the tribal areas of our country. Indeed, it is in view of their low technological development and general economic backwardness that the tribes have become a special concern of the nation. Their standard of living is very low and their per capita income is very much lower than that of others. Earlier anthropologists did not pay much attention to tribal economy as they were not so much concerned with planning, execution and evaluation of welfare programmes. They were content to describe the technology of the tribe and did not deal with the economic relations subsisting in different tribes. Analysis of tribal economy is modern economic terms is comparatively recent. In post independence India great efforts have been made to improve the economy of the tribals but the success achieved has not been commensurate with the expenditure of money and human labour. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that tribal economy has been treated in isolation. It has been forgotten that economy is only a part of the social system and all our economic actions are set in a social frame work. In many programmes of economic change a great many barriers cultural, social and psychological exist. They have to be understood and then carefully removed.

Of the thirty million tribals in India, a preponderant majority i.e. 80% subsist by agriculture. The few tribes that subsist by hunting, foodgathering cattle herding or industry are very small in numbers. So the basis of tribal economy is land and agriculture. Land is not just a means of subsistance for the tribal, it is a spiritual bond which unites him with his ancestors. It has been noticed that as long as the tribal people are allowed to keep their land, they could also keep their independent outlook on life, their self reliance, their honesty and integrity. Once they are uprooted from their land they lose their independence and become hewers of wood and drawers

of water for other people. The process of Iand alienation has been progress for a long time. Clever moneylenders and Zamindars with the help of an alien legal system succeeded in dispossessing many a tribal from the land of his forefathers. It was only in this century that special laws were passed to check the transfer of tribal lands to non-tribals. While the practice was checked it was not entirely stopped and as late as 1960 the Dhebar Commission found many lapses in the working of these Acts. In recent times it has been found necessary to displace some tribals from their lands for establishing big industries. This has also caused a lot of discontent even though suitable compensation has been paid.

It is necessary that all states should take up as expeditiously as possible a survey of tribal areas in order to discover the amount of cultivable land available and the extent to which the tribal people have no established rights in the areas they cultivate. This should be followed by a sincere attempt to establish the tribal people in their rights to the land they have cultivated traditionally. Land Alienation Acts must be carefully reexamined in the light of the present situation. If necessary these Acts should be drastically amended to plug all the loophol. There should be a general prohibition of all transfer by sale, mortgage, gift or lease under any kind of agreement or contract affecting the lands of the tribals. If the lands of tribals are acquired by industrial establishments, efforts should be made to compensate them with land for land and house for house. Any scheme of rehabilitation should not be unnder-taken without consultation of the tribal people concerned. Such rehabilitation colonies should be completed before the tribals are asked to vacate their traditional homes. While preparing the record of rights the approach of the officers should be human rather than legalistic as far as possible.

Besides restoration and preservation of the land rights of the tribal communities, the introduction of the scientific shifting cultivation and the improvement of agricultural practices for more and better production of food are the two other problems of tribal agriculture. In many parts of tribal India shifting cultivation known by different names is prevalent. Everyone agrees that shifting cultivation is not an ideal method

but the total replacement of the system if it is possible at all must take a very long time. It is a mixed problem partly connected with the physical conditions of the land and partly with social customs, traditions and beliefs. Any hurried departure may cause complications. Some people have suggested conversion of shifting cultivation fields into terraced fields. Whenever hill slopes permit and the soil is sufficiently deep, this holds out immense possibilities of improvement but it involves a very large initial outlay. The other possible alternative is to regullate shifting cultivation on scientific lines so as to limit its disadvantages and to promote the fertility of the soil so that it can produce more food. The jhum cycle may be shortened to enable larger areas to be cultivated every year. While the land is allowed to recuperate its fertility, Arhar pulse, cowpeas etc., can be grown. Efforts should be made to minimise soil erosion. Cutting of trees should be eliminated and in winter a rabi crop can be raised. Ultimately to Jhum lands may be convested into stabilized permanent fields. The solution of this problem is not easy as many human factors are involved. Coercive legislation will create complications. Supposing that all shifting cultivators agree to give up the practice, it would be a great problem to settle them on permanent fields which are scarce.

Soil conservation is a very important aspect of the land problem of the tribals. A phased programme of conservation including contour bunding, gully plugging, terracing and field bunding should be prepared for every Tribal Development Block. Subsidies should be given for soil conservation measures on individual as well as community holdings.

If intensive cultivation is to be pursued in tribal areas irrigation facilities must be made available in as large measure as possible to the tribal people. The demand for more irrigation facilities is universal. In order to meet this the state governments should fix targets for minor and medium irrigation work in tribal areas. Irrigation wells should be constructed on full subsidy basis.

There is considerable scope for development of horticulture and cash crops in the tribal areas. In Chotanagpur the

cultivation of rainy season potatoes has given good dividends. Good variety cotton also holds a good promise for this area. A large member of tribals in Ranchi and Jamshedpur have taken to vegetable growing in a big way. Due to the efforts of the Community Development authorities tribals have also taken to production of peaches, papaya, cashew nuts etc., which bring them ready income. Tribals cannot derive full advantage from these measures unless transport and marketing facilities are provided and middlemen are eliminated.

Improved agricultural implements have been evolved for the plains areas. It is necessary that special attention be paid to the needs of the hill and plateau keeping in view the hard soil and poor variety of draught animals available. Improvement in the breed of the cattle in the tribal areas is necessary. Such breeds should be popularised as are not very expensive to maintain. As the tribals lead hand to mouth existance they cannot afford expensive feed for their cattle. More over as there is no system of stall feeding it is impossible to check breeding with scrub bulls unless they are all castrated. As regards the introduction of better breed of poultry, it is suggested that a hybrid of native and white leghorn and Red Island Rhode is more suitable than a pure bred white leghorn or R.I.R as the former have a better chance of survival. In areas near to towns poultry can add substantially to the income of the tribals.

The tribals had been traditionally denizens of the forest. In many areas forests have been cut but the tribals are nowhere far from the forests. They have reclaimed large areas from the forests for cultivation. Their gods reside on the hills and in the forests. They like being surrounded by forests. They depend upon the forests for their fuel, timber for house building and for grazing ground for their cattle. They gather forest produce like Kendo leaves for biri manufacture, Chironjee bees-wax, honey and lac and sell them in the market. They get their medicinal herbs from the forest. In most areas the tribals have been dissatisfied with forest administration. It is necessary that the rights of the tribals in forests should be respected and their legitimate needs and aspirations be met. In the exploitation of the forests Govern-

ment should not admit any middlemen between themselves and the tribals. Fullest amenities should be given to the tribals in the forest villages. Forest departments should have a role in tribal welfare programme. The management of the village forests should be handed over to the panchayats. Suitable areas for afforestation may be given over to these panchayats together with necessary technical guidance. Efforts should be made to give employment to the tribals all the year round. Active encouragement should be given to the forest Labourers Co-operative societies.

Andhra Pradesh Government is to be complimented for starting the Scheduled Tribes Co-operative Finance and Development Corporation. This may be followed by Bihar with such modifications as circumstances may require with a view to consolidate and develop the economy of the tribal particularly in relation to purchase of minor forest produce supply of requirements to the members, processing and grading of forest produce for the benefit of the tribals, discharge of prior debts and to act as an agent of government for procurement, supply and distribution of agricultural and other produce. The programme should cover all the tribal areas by primary co-operatives which should function as agents of the Central Institution.

One of the glaring facts of tribal economy is indebtedness. Although it is difficult to assess the total volume of debt in a community, it is not difficult to find that the bulk of the tribal population is steeped in debt. It is also a major cause of their exploitation. The tribal is so much in debt to the money lender that he may stake his own life and the life of his family in his service for long periods of time. Many debts go on from generation to generation and the debtor's family is reduced to the position of bonded labour.*

Poor technology and low productivity lead the tribal to debt even for meeting his daily requirement of life such as seed, food salt, clothing and so on and in order to fulfil such

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*Various practices of this kind are known to exist. In Andhra Pradesh we have the Godhi and Vethi system. In M.P. it is known as the Hali system, Rajasthan, it is called the Sagri system.

social obligations as marriage, festivals and death ceremonies. He continues to cling to the money lender as the latter is ready to oblige him at all times even though, he charges exhorbitant rates of interest. The personal human contact between the debtor and the creditor makes the tribal think of the money lender as a necessary evil. In many areas in Santal Parganas I found that the tribal is not interested in improving his agriculture as most of the produce is mortgaged in advance to the money lender.

The problem has to be attacked on various fronts. Social legislation should be enacted to prevent the operation of money lenders in Scheduled areas. The legislation should be strictly enforced. Liquidation of tribal debts of more than three years standing should be taken up. Debt conciliation proceedings may be started. All these measures would not produce results unless there is an effective system of giving credit to the tribal both for productive and unproductive purposes at short notice and without much red tape. Social education should be effectively promoted in tribal areas to encourage thrift. The borrowing habit must be discouraged. Last but not the least it is important to raise the income level of the tribals so that the need to borrow is not recurrent. It is necessary to break the vicious circle of backward agriculture, need to borrow and abject poverty. Government sponsored grain golas and co-operative societies are as yet too few to meet this challenge and the management of both may have to be drastically altered to make them more useful than hitherto.

Among most of the tribes a strong social and community sense is evident. In their traditional economy a number of agricultural, hunting, fishing and other occupations were managed on co-operative lines. This feeling was probably born out of a regard for reciprocity and tends to be shattered with the growing impact of money economy in which most of the goods and services can be purchased. This leads to the growth of individualism which it is difficult to harness for co-operative societies of the modern kind. The co-operative movement has not made much headway in tribal areas. The workers who were entrusted with this task did not know of the corporate practices of the tribals and could not relate the formal programme to them. The rules and regulations are far too com-

plicated for the non-literate or poorly educated tribal. In some areas the co-operatives have come under the control of the non-tribals and do not render as much help to him as desirable. Poor as they are they find it difficult to pay the share capital.

It would be useful to prepare the people psychologically for the co-operative society before actually forming one. Care should be taken to see that crafty, rich or influential sections of the people do not dominate the societies. Service co-operative should be formed as soon as possible to serve the largest number of tribal people. The procedure for advance of loans should be simplified so that the tribals may not fall into the clutches of money lenders. The sale and marketing of produce and supply of tribal people's requirements should be the main concern of co-operative societies. The state should help the co-operatives in tribal areas by contributing to the share capital, construction of godowns and provision of managerial staff wherever necessary. The minimum credit of a member should be fixed on his capacity to raise crops on the land rather than on the acreage of his holdings. The co-operatives can also act as grain banks where grain can be deposited and may be given out on loan to needy members.

The problem of poverty and very low standard of living in tribal India owing to poor agricultural yield can be mitigated through the development of village and cottage industries. Cottage industries can utilize and develop the creative faculties of the tribal people, provide gainful employment to them and offer an avenue for converting the raw materials into processed articles. There are a number of tribes which have special interest in certain kinds of crafts. The Asur have got experience in iron smelting and smithy. The Mahli make excellent bamboo and cane baskets. The Birhors have got special interest in rope making. Some tribes have got prejudice against certain occupations and these factors should be taken into consideration while locating such rural industries in tribal areas. Availability of raw materials locally, proper direction and large scale organisation are essential for the development of village industries. Consumer goods industries processing industries and handicrafts and craft pieces can all be developed with guidance, technical assistance, training facilities and financial help. In many states, training-cum-production centres were opened but a follow up of the trainees

show that a large number of trained personnel do not remain in those industries. This is probably due to lack of care in the selection of trainees and also lack of forethought in the location of these centres. In parts of Bihar processing of tobacco and biri manufacture can be taken up on large scale. It would be helpful if the organisation of production and marketing of these goods is done on co-operative basis.

In many tribal areas fishing programme has been very successful. This can be managed through the village co-operative as the initial outlay is small and the dividend is very rich. Even if the fish is not marketed, it will add to the poor diet of the tribals in a substantial way.

One of the greatest stumbling blocks in the development of tribal economy is poor communications. Many times the produce of the tribal areas have to be disposed of at nominal prices as it is not possible to carry them to big markets where they might fetch better prices. Efforts are being made to develop communication in the tribal areas so that they may be well connected with towns, markets etc.

In India great stress is being laid on rapid industrialization in the successive five year plans. Priority is being given to basic industries and production of capital goods. Most of the areas in which raw materials for the basic industries are found are situated in tribal areas. These areas are being opened up for the exploitation of coal, iron, copper, mica, manganese, bauxite and other minerals. Gigantic steel plants, heavy engineering industries and numerous mining operations are there. Thus industrialization has come to the tribal in a big way and it is rapidly transforming not only the persons directly employed but also their dependents and other people. We have already referred to the displacement of the tribal from his hearth and home for the erection of the plant and of the surrounding township. A firmly settled villager becomes a refugee losing his kith and kin and the land and the gods he worshipped. With due care and foresight the sufferings of a displaced person can be mitigated. A wise outlay of the compensation money, preference in employment and training facilities for skilled jobs in industry would help to keep the tribal on his feet.

It is however doubtful whether it will be possible to arrest

the tide of detribalization which comes in the train of industrialization. The values inherent in industrialization are in contrast to traditional tribal ethos. The tribals were living in comparative isolation in a more or less closed society. Their movement was limited. Their economic, social and political relationships were concentrated in a particular area. This concept of space has been drastically broadened. The traditional identity based on an image of insulated spaciousness has come into conflict with a new image of explosive global closeness. The improvement in the means of communications has led to wide spatial mobility. The value of time has drawned upon him. The introduction of money economy has transformed the traditional communal gods of the extended kinship groups to those of personal achievement and individual career. This has resulted in changing the structure of the family and the position of men and women in it. The newly achieved status in industry affects the form and nature of leadership. A man who enters as a mere labourer by successive rises becomes a middle class man. Such social mobility is unknown in traditional tribal society. It leads to the creation of a self conscious status group and ultimately to the growth of a class system which militates against the tribal norm of egalitarian society. Educational facilities in industrial zones lead to a fundamental shift in emphasis in the theories of causation and led to growth of consciousness about one's rights and privileges. The most fundamental change is the loss of homogeneity. The anonymity in a labour settlement gives ample opportunity to the anti-social propensities of individual tribals.

We have only touched upon some of the important problems of tribal economy. Through the community development programme concerted effort is being made for an all round development of tribal economy. There is anxiety to raise their level of living as speedily as possible. As equal citizens of a great democracy they must enjoy the fruits of development. But all such schemes must be carried out with the consent and active co-operation of the people for whom it is meant. The new pattern of Panchayati Raj will make this possible to a large extent. We may add here that social education must go hand in hand to make the changes lasting and effective. People must realise what they are working for. Only then the best results can be achieved.

BIRSA-AN ADIVASI FIGHTER FOR FREEDOM

Youth and Education :

At the close of the 19th century, the land of the Mundas was the seat of widespread ferment and unrest. The leader in whom Mundas found the embodiment of their aspirations was Birsa. In the true Indian tradition of the prophet-politician, Birsa wielded tremendous influence and force. Through sheer will power and selfless service he commanded total confidence and implicit loyalty of his people.

Born in or about 1874 in Gareria Ulihatu in the Tamar police station of the Khunti sub-division, he was the fourth child of Sugna Munda, a peasant of very small means. As his parents found it very difficult to live on the scanty lands at their disposal, five-year-old Birsa was sent to be reared in his mother's native village of Ayubhatu. Being very much attached to his mother's sister, he was taken by the latter to village Khatanga where he was married. This village like many others in the same neighbourhood was habitually visited by Christian missionaries. In their sermons they derided aboriginal culture and religion. At night they also used to teach inquisitive villagers reading and writing. It was here that Birsa came in contact with missionaries. Sharp as he was, within a couple of months he picked up reading and writing. When engrossed in study, he completely forgot his suroundings. Even when he was sent to tend sheep and goats, he used to practise writing on the ground. Some of his goats at times strayed in the fields of others and damage was done to their crops. For this negligence, Birsa had to suffer more than once. At one time some of the goats under his charge were lifted by wolves. On this his mother's sister's husband became very angry and beat him severely. Extremely pained, Birsa left the village and went to live with his eldest brother.

At that time, a Brahman pandit named Anand Pande used to attract students in the village of Gaurbera from nearby

villages. Impelled by the thirst for knowledge, Birsa took service in his house. He served his Guru with great devotion. He used to work for the whole day in the Guru's field and took lessons in the evenings. The Guru used to recite stories from the great Hindu epics. Birsa was greatly impressed by the valour of Rama, Lakshman, Bhima and Arjun. During his sojourn at Gaurbera, he also visited Bomhani where a reputed Vaishnava saint was giving discourses on Bhakti. He was so much influenced by the doctrine of non-violence preached by that Saint that he gave up hunting and non-vegetarian food.

Once while on the way from Gaurbera to Khatanga he came across a preacher of the German Mission who took him to the Mission house at Burju. He was admitted to the Mission school from where he passed the Upper Primary standard. Then he was sent to the Chaibasa Mission school whence he passed the Middle standard. The environment in the Mission schools did not suit him at all. He was tired of hearing abuses hurled at his religion and culture and he had to go without food on the days when non-vegetarian food was cooked in the kitchen. His restless spirit was stifled in that atmosphere. Surely it was only his anxiety to educate himself that kept him in the Mission schools inspite of their galling air. At that time there were no non-Mission schools in that area.

Social Service and Religious Reform:

Birsa left school to live with his parents in Chalkad, the village to which they had migrated. The education he received at the hands of the missionaries enabled him to find the dark spots in his own culture. He found his people steeped in ignorance, worshipping numerous spirits and godlings. He wanted to cut adrift from traditional moorings. On one occasion Birsa and his whole family had to starve because there was no food in the house nor was there money to buy some. He saw an old woman being buried in her grave with silver ornaments. At dead of night, he stole to the burial place, descecrated the grave and took out the ornaments. Next day he sold them in the market and bought food for his entire family. But his action was soon discovered and every one began to hate him as one who had broken an age-old taboo and as a burglar. Unable to bear this ignominy, Birsa left

his home to wander for a fortnight in the jungle seeking solace and divine light. Even when he returned to the village he remained a social outcast. He used to spend his nights in meditation and found happiness in *Harikirtan* which he had learnt from the Vaishnava Saint. His contemplative countenance and *Harikirtan* soon began to attract young men of the village. After *Harikirtan,* he gave discourses on religion. He wanted to uproot superstition and taught that the highest religion was service to others. He asked people to worship only one deity *Singbonga.* He advised them to eschew violence and to give up animal sacrifice. All living beings according to him were children of God, *Singbonga.* He forbade the taking of wine and other intoxicants including *hanria.* He asked his followers to use the sacred thread and stressed the purity of heart at the time of worship. He thought that buildings were not needed for worship and retained the worship of *Singbonga* in the *Sarna* or the sacred grove of the village. He wrote a prayer book which is not extant now, reclaimed many converts from the Christian fold and saved many from conversion.

Old Mundas of the village were perturbed by Birsa's activities and preachings, because if sacrifices were not offered to the village deities and harmful spirits were not propitiated, some calamity was bound to befall the village. Soon after there was a visitation of small-pox and it was naturally attributed to the activities of Birsa. People forced him to leave the village, but even after his departure the epidemic had not abated. Birsa returned when his parents were attacked with the disease and from then to the end of the period of the visitation he engaged himself in selfless service of the sick. This earned him the praise and respect of the entire village. In 1895, there was a similar visitation near Muchia Chalkad. His untiring nursing saved many lives. People began to believe that there was magic in his touch, and the number of his followers began to increase. Vast number of people used to come daily for his *darshan* and heard his message.

Birsa-The Revolutionary :

Chotanagpur in the closing years of the last century presented a spectacle of exploitation. Lots of outsiders called 'Diku'

in the form of petty traders, zamindars and their agents had come to settle in Chotanagpur. The land of the Mundas was dominated by these outsiders. Their lands were taken away and the solidarity of the village broken up. Communal ownership of the village by *Khunt Katti* tenure was shatered. Most of the Munda families were impoverished and were living in a state of perpetual famine. Birsa himself had the experience of pangs of hunger. Christian missionaries by their activities were creating dissensions in the villages and detribalising the converts by planting an alien culture in the heart of Munda country. All this produced a widespread feeling of discontent and unrest which was echoed in Birsa's heart with a loud note.

Birsa raised his voice against the growing influence of Christian missonaries as well as against the oppression and exploitation of the zamindars and against the foreign rule which fostered these elements. In his speeches he called the missionaries hirelings of the foreign domination and so long as the former were not uprooted, Adivasi culture could not be saved. Birsa kindled the flame of revolt that was burning in the heart of all Adivasis. He exhorted his followers to rise up against foreigners. He roused the apprehensions of the missionaries and they prevailed upon Government to take steps against him. A force was sent to Chalkad and there was a scuffle between it and Birsa's followers. Warrant for Birsa's arrest was issued but it was not easy to arrest him. He was ultimately captured with the aid of one, Rev. Lusty. He was brought to Ranchi in chains. To strike terror in the hearts of the Adivasis it was decided to try him in the open. But the revolt was not crushed, though Birsa was sentenced to two and a half year's imprisonment. He was released in 1897 on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

On return home, people began to come for his *darshan* in thousands. He started the work of organization in right earnest. He and his followers went from village to village organising forces of opposition. As meetings could not be held in daytime, they were held at night. On the night of Holi of 1897 he sent-revolutionary messages to many of his co-workers in distant villages. In Simbua Buru, he sounded the call for open rebellion.

Famine, scarcity and small -pox ravaged the Munda country between the years 1897-99. This gave Birsa's bands excellent

opportunities for social service. They came in contact with suffering masses and gained their confidence. The zamindars continued to oppress people and missionaries speeded up the work of conversion. Birsa exhorted people to fight injustice and to come under his banner. Gradually he began to build up a force. Training in the use of bows, arrows and swords was given to the recruits. Gaya Munda, a close follower of Birsa was made the Minister and Commander-in-Chief. Birsa as a dynamic leader went from place to place looking after training, organization and morale of the forces in Khunti, Ranchi, Chakradharpur, Bundu, Tamar, Karra, Basia, Sisai, etc. Khunti was the headquarters of the rebel forces.

The final meeting was held on the Dumbari Hill. Delegagates from different parts of the Munda country came to receive directions and discuss the plan of operations with the chief. It was resolved to start the movement on the Christmas Day of 1899. On the night of the appointed day, Gaya Munda sent three parties for assault on the mission house at Sarwada, Murhu and Burju. With one hundred followers Gaya Munda himself stormed the Sarwada mission and set fire to it. In Burju, police had been called by the missionaries. Five policemen were killed in the fight. The forces then returned to their headquarters and deliberated upon their future plans. On the banks of river Tajna, there was a fight between Birsa's band and the police. The latter were routed. Birsa himself with a following of 300 strong attacked the Khunti police station and killed the sub-Inspector of Police. Gaya Munda's assault upon Ranchi was miscarried. There were minor incidents at Karra, Torpa, Basia etc.

When the news of the rising reached Ranchi, authorities sent two forces towards Maranghada and Burju. The Deputy Commissioner wanted to make peace but the rebel forces spurned the offer. Dumbari Hill where rebel forces had concentrated together with women and children as a safe refuge, was surrounded by armed forces. The besiegers opened fire on the 9th January 1900. Birsa's band began to come down the hill and answered the fire with a shower of arrows, but they could not stand long against Government forces. About 200 men, women and children were killed. Ultimately the rebel forces dispersed. People began to be arrested on suspicion for complicity in the

rebellion. Missionaries became very active in rounding up suspects. Those who agreed to be converted were spared. In Maranghada, Soeko and Sarwada many Mundas were converted in this way.

At the time of firing, neither Birsa nor Gaya Munda was on the Dumbari Hill. Birsa escaped to the jungles of Singbhum and Gaya Munda was in hiding in village Etke. Later when police parties arrived in Etke, Gaya fell fighting. All the hills and forests were combed for Birsa. Government announced a reward for his arrest. Out of greed, two Mundas, Kande and Bir Singh began a thorough search for his hide out. With their help, police were able to arrest him. He was brought to the Bandgaon Dak bangalow where people began to gather for his *darshan*. Apprehending an attempt to rescue him, Birsa was sent to Ranchi. Eighty of his followers also were imprisoned with him in the Ranchi jail. Soon after Birsa died of cholera in the jail.

Thus ended a great life every minute of which was spent for the betterment of the lot of the people he loved. Great were his qualities of head and heart and his intense love of his people earned for him the name 'Bhagwan' and 'Dharti Aba' or Lord of the world. His followers still believe that he will come back to life once more. He is the theme of many a song and folktale. When children are christened, the name Birsa is a favourite with parents.

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN TRIBAL BIHAR

Introduction

When the second General Election under the new constitution of India was held in February-March 1957, an attempt was made to estimate the political consciousness of the Munda and the Oraon as several places where polling booths were situated. Three research assistants of mine were deputed to different centres with a small questionnaire. In most cases, however, the interviews had to be open-ended in nature and had to be combined with observation.

I

The great majority of the tribals do not have an exact idea of the purpose of elections. On being asked about it the characteristic reply was, 'How could we know about it? We are simple illiterate village folk'. In one area people first came to know of elections in the month of January when brisk canvassing began in that area. Those who had voted in the first election recalled their earlier experience but others were in a confused state of mind. Except those who had come into contact with party workers of any political party everyone thought that he was going to vote because others did the same and no harm had thereby come to the latter. In one area people disclosed that no public meetings had been held but door to door canvassing had been carried on. Some of them had received leaflets in the village markets which they did not understand.

The interest which the tribal voters took in this election was very much less than in the first election. From three

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*Director, Social Education Organisers' Training Centre, Ranchi.

polling booths in the Ghaghra Police Station, a purely Oraon area, the following figures were collected:

	Strength of the electorate	Number of votes cast	No. of male voters	No. of female voters	Total percentage
Kurag	800	291	234	59	36.3
Dodang	1100	261	227	34	23.8
Toto	700	194	155	39	27.5

These figures amply prove that the tribals were not at all anxious to use their franchise. Women voters turned up only from the villages in which booths were situated.

II

The tribals were familiar with party symbols like the cock, bullocks and cycle which stood for the Jharkhand, Congress and Janata parties respectively. In one area people appeared to be very much party-minded. The merits and demerits of the candidates set up by their party did not very much matter for them. Most of the people at one booth appeared to favour the Jharkhand party. The sitting M. L. A. from that area was a popular figure elected on the Jharkhand party ticket. But this time due to a rift in the party, he did not get the party ticket. Even then he contested the election as an independent candidate. His contestant, the official candidate of the Jharkhand party, was unknown in that locality. The latter had never personally canvassed in that area. The agents asked people only to look for the symbol of the 'Cock' and drop the ballot paper in the box with that symbol. It was also seen that most of the tribal voters flocked near the seat of the agent of the Jharkhand party while the Rajput, Brahman and voters of other castes took their identity tickets from Congress or Janata party agents.

Asked about reasons for casting vote in a particular box many interesting answers were given. When a tribal voter came out of the booth after casting his vote an investigator enquired of him as to how he had voted. The voter had forgotten whom he had voted for and replied in a happy-go-luck manner, 'Babu, it is just a matter of luck for the party

concerned. However you make up your mind, when you entet inside (the booth) you are bewildered and drop your ballot paper for the party which is lucky enough to have it'. One voter was so much perplexed when he went inside the booth that he said, 'I tried hard to find out the cock symbol but failed. In the meantime people waiting outside (Polling Officers) asked me to hurry up and in haste I do not know where I dropped my ballot papers'.

For some other tribal voters the party or its work in the interests of the public had little importance. Some had a peculiar fascination for the party symbols. One voter said, 'Bullocks are our wealth and so I have cast my vote in the box with that symbol'. Another remarked, 'I possess a few bullocks, so I must vote for my bullocks'. One party agent exhorted his supporters not to forget the bullocks. This propaganda was countered by the other party by saying that though bullocks help them in ploughing, the cock saves them from distress and disease by being sacrificed to 'Singbonga' and therefore they must vote for the Cock.

A seventy-year old voter when asked about his choice clearly said that he had voted for the Bullocks as he ploughed the land with the oxen and the Cock was of no use to him. Another reason of his voting for Congress was that he had seen the Congress candidate. Some other voters said that they had voted solidly for one party as no one could go against what the majority does. One of them said, 'You do not expect me to swim against the current'. In a few areas the traditional panchayats decided the way in which votes were to be cast and the entire village voted in one way. No one dared to go against the panchayat's decision. Some voters revealed that Church fathers had asked them to vote in a certain way and they could not go against their wishes.

One person narrated the following story to explain why he voted for the Congress, 'I saw Gandhiji at Jamshedpur praying to Lord Shiva. One day he jumped into boiling oil and remained there praying to the Lord. Shiva appeared before him and blessed him and asked him to pray to Goddess Kali. Gandhiji prayed to her for six months, one day she appeared before him. I saw this with my own eyes and there were hundreds of persons

who saw it. Goddess Kali told him that his wishes were granted and the British will have to leave this country and that he would be the king. After saying this She disappeared.'

This made him believe that he is right in supporting the Congress candidate. He told others who did not believe him that even if their candidate won, he would not be of much use as the Congress will still rule. The personality of Pandit Nehru gave another reason for people voting Congress. 'The Government is headed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who is a pandit and does everything after consulting Shastras (scriptures) and therefore things are running so smoothly. The Mundas cannot do it. The work of ruling is of Brahmans and so only Panditji can do it'.

In most areas people were deeply impressed by the Jharkhanda party's propaganda of Jharkhand for the people of the soil. People believed that the Government did not understand their problems and introduced such schemes which the people did not need. They readily believed when it was said that people from outside Chotanagpur were holding key posts there. If the Government provided wells, taxes have also been imposed. The Jharkhand party compels Government to pay scholarship to the Adivasis (aboriginals). Congress is an organization of non-Adivasis. The Government was enforcing Chakbandi' against people's wishes. Though Jharkhand was a rich area in respect of minerals the people were exploited and poor. When people were asked if their dream of having Jharkhand had been realized when they voted for that party in the first election some of them replied that though their dreams could not be realized, they would get it ultimately.

Some tribals known as Tana Bhagats who are vegetarians, wear khadi (hand-spun hand-woven cloth) and follow Gandhiji voted solidly for the Congress because it was Gandhiji's party. Their number is small but so strong is their faith in Gandhiji and his teaching that no amount of propaganda by agents of the Jharkhand party could waver it.

At a polling station in the Munda area wavering voters were given the identity cards forcibly by party agents and told that if they did not exercise their franchise they would be punished

by the Government. They were also told that Mahatma Gandhi would be present in the polling booth and though they might not be able to see him, he would see how each person voted and if they want to avoid dire consequences they must vote for the pair of oxen.

Workers of certain welfare organizations played an active part in the elections. In one village where the propaganda of the opponents was strong, the villagers were told that the newly obtained order for opening a school in that village would be cancelled if they voted against the Government. When the opponents sent their agents in that village, the villagers drove them away as they did not want to lose their school anyway.

In one area the Janata party had set up a candidate who was till recently the landlord in that area. The troubles and tyranny during the zemindari regime were played up by other parties. People were reminded of forced labour, numerous impositions and other oppressions of zemindar. The voters naturally sore with the conditions prevailing in days gone by were easily weaned away from that party. The ruling party was charged with the nonfulfilment of the promises of its candidates in the first election. Though zemindari had been abolished, land revenue had increased and people had no financial relief. Villagers had been prohibited from cutting wood from the jungle. If they still went to the jungle to fetch fire-wood they were subjected to endless harassment by forest officials. Instead of people being allowed to use the jungle for their petty needs, it had been turned over to the rich contractors and common people felt that they had been deprived of something which they could claim as their own. In these circumstances people were asked to vote for the third party which had a vague programme with an elusive objective and no solid constructive work to its credit.

In some cases some of the missionaries took more than usual interest in the election and in areas where the concentration of converted tribals was great their views had strong grip over the people. Even the election pamphlets of some candidates assumed the support of the Christian tribals.

III

A perusal of the election appeals of two opponents from one constituency would reveal that puerile nature of the propaganda carried on.

A. Please do not forget

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have sent our representative to the Legislative Assembly many times. But we have not got an able man even once. This time God has sympathised with us and that great man has appeared in this election. Stout in body, comely in looks, tall in stature and adorned by a silk shirt, attractive, undaunted orator, Sri X who has sacrificed his soul on the altar of social service for the cause of the country is standing before you.

Wise men are engaged in uplifting you all with great alertness. The illiterate class should also become active. There should be no refusal. Missionary brothers would be greatly benefited. (We) will give full rights over the burial ground and reward persons who get their names inscribed there. As this candidate is sponsored by the Jharkhand party, Christians will be given special privileges. Non-Christian tribals and non-tribals should not be worried as they would be given freedom to drink wine.

Future members of the Legislative Assembly are mad with joy to know that he is going to join them. They are breathing a sigh of relief. They are fully confident that the Legislative Assembly would shine forth. It will be completely changed. All plans will succeed. All the troubles of people will vanish and Ram Rajya (Kingdom of God) will be established. Therefore you should not forget the election symbol of Sri X.

B. Our holy thought

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Our five yearly festival (Vote) has arrived. It means that we have to send an able person to the Bihar Legislative Assembly through our pure thoughts. Now we have two persons before us. It is from these two that we have to choose an active

person with a pure heart. It is now necessary to know the distinctive features of an able person. The person who is responsible for people comprising two police stations must be educated. He should have some proof of having done something for the country, should be a selfless person, should have a fixed aim and should have worked for getting education, communications and tanks for people.

Shri Y is a dutiful person, cultured society respects him. He is always engaged in constructive work. He knows that illiteracy is a great curse and to eradicate it he has opened many schools and hostels and induced the Government to award scholarship to many students. He has got the approval of the Government for many embankments and wells. In times of scarcity he has distributed grain and clothes and even to-day is moving day and night for satisfying the manifold needs of common people. With pure thought he is engrossed in social service. So Y is full of many pure qualities.

The second candidate is Shri X who was formerly in Congress but has now joined the Jharkhand party. His mind is not steady. As regards literacy he can only sign. He had no opportunity of serving the country. When there was shortage of vegetable seeds in Chotanagpur he was busy in selling these. When he had leisure he used to take litigants to court. His nature is cruel. Children who pluck guavas from his orchard are severely beaten by him. His name does not appear on his pamphlets. Now you can understand who is better of the two candidates. Surely you will find Shri Y to be better.

Therefore we appeal to all lovers of the country that they should cast their votes in the ballot box of our non-Christian brother Shri Y and elect him a member of the Legislative Assembly.

IV

The study of the state of political consciousness of tribals brings out the following points:

1. None of the parties seeking election from reserved seats seriously tried to educate the people politically.

2. The merit of the individual candidates did not matter. People voted for the party rather than for the candidate.

3. Opposition parties instead of putting forward an alternative programme banked on the failings of the ruling party.

4. Unscrupulous politicians made use of the Church and traditional leadership for mobilizing public opinion in their favour by fair means or foul.

5. Students and teachers worked as election agents for propaganda among tribals.

6. The tribal is more concerned about the petty tyrannies touching him rather than in national affairs. Petty grievances loom large in the context of elections.

7. General interest in the elections was at a strikingly low ebb compared to the first election. This is evidenced by the low percentage of total votes cast.

8. There is no political consciousness worth the name among tribal women and the few that turned up to cast their votes voted as their menfolk instructed them.

9. All the political parties through their election symbols appealed more to sentiment than to reason.

10. The standard of appeals to the electorate was remarkably low and arguments put therein were puerile.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN A MUNDA VILLAGE

Introduction

In Free India, government-sponsored panchayats have been established in tribal villages as in ordinary villages inhabited by Hindu or Muslim farmers. In most parts of Chotanagpur, the traditional system[1] has disappeared, but there are some pockets where it is still fairly strong. Fieldwork was undertaken in one such pocket in the Khunti Subdivision of the Ranchi district, forty miles from Ranchi.

The village lies under the jurisdiction of Tapkara village panchayat. Tapkara is a small business centre where a weekly market is held every Saturday. There are two churches run by the English and German missions. The surrounding area is predominantly Christian.

The village is divided into six wards or tolas whose populations are noted below.

Total	No. houses or families	Male	Female	Total
Munda tola	20	65	60	125
Pahan tola	23	59	56	115
Mahto tola	11	30	43	73
Tala tola	12	35	40	75
Soso tola	7	21	25	46
Jhera tola	7	23	24	47
Total	80	233	248	481

The first five tolas are peopled by Mundas. There are only two Lohar families. The Jhera tola has no Christian member and the little community is dependent on the dominant population. Among the Munda, there are no unconverted families. All belong to the German Mission and S. P. G. Mission. There are two churches in the village, both built by the initiative of the villagers. Village people were reluctant to reveal

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[1]For a description of the traditional system, see Roy, S. C. : *Mundas and Their Country*, Ranchi, 1912.

the reason why there were two churches. It was however, discovered that there were two factions in the village and there was a difference of opinion as to the siting of the church between the leaders. The factions were represented by the Munda and Pahan Khunt or lineages. In important village affairs, even now, if there was divergence of public opinion it was always oriented on the line of cleavage between the Pahan Khunt and the Munda Khunt. The history of the cleavage dates back to the late nineteenth century when the British administrative system was making itself felt in the remote villages, and there was a strife in every Munda village regarding leadership which was disputed by the Munda (secular headman) and the Pahan (religious headman). This strife has been referred to by Hoffmann and Lister in their memorandum when dealing with the reasons of the break-up of the Khuntkatti system.

Cases within a Village

The dominant clan in this village is Guria. Very few families belong to other clans and these families are affines of Guria families. There are the three lineages or Khunts of the Guria clan, the Pahan Khunt, Munda Khunt and the Mahto Khunt. In each of the Khunts, there is a recognized social head called the Khuntdar. The Khuntdar's position is not hereditary, but the most important person in respect of education, birth and influence is recognized as the Khuntdar by the rest of the members of the lineage. We did not come across a tola panchayat in this village as reported from certain neighbouring villages. The Khuntdar provides a link between the members of his lineage and the village panchayat. Every case which occurs in his area is reported to him in the first instance. It is he who moves in the matter and gets together a meeting of the village or Hatu panchayat. In the village panchayat any person can attend and speak. Women however do not attend. All cases other than homicide can be decided by the village panchayat. A review of some cases dealt with by the village panchayat will give an idea of the state of crime and punishment in Koenara.

Cases within a Village

1. There was a jack-fruit tree on the border of the fields of Mansidh and his uncle. From the time of the partition, the

ownership of the tree was disputed between them. The tree was possessed by Mansidh while the fruits were enjoyed by his uncle. The case was taken to the Hatu panchayat for decision. The decision was that Mansidh was the owner of the tree and his uncle's claim was not admitted.

2. Tunta Munda, a resident of Koenara, once saw a pig eating crops in his field. He chased the pig, but when he entered the village, the pig mingled with a herd of pigs grazing there. Tunta failed to recognize the pig which had eaten his crop. He followed another pig and later on killed it. The owner of the second pig, Johan, appealed to the village panchayat. Tunta had to pay a fine of Rs. 25 to the aggrieved party.

3. Masih Prakash Mahto once killed a sheep which was eating paddy in his field. Before other villagers, he declared that the sheep was being carried off by a hyena and that he got it that way. But a person had seen him killing the sheep. The meat of the sheep was eaten by many people. The person who had seen him killing the sheep disclosed the matter and a suit was brought against him by the owner before the panchayat. Masih Prakash was fined to cover the value of the sheep, which was paid to the complainant.

4. For a long time, there was a strained relation between Johan and his son Mansidh. The latter had deserted his father in old age and allowed him to starve. The father lodged a complaint with the Khuntdar, who called a meeting of the panchayat. The decision was that, so long as the father was alive, his son had to maintain him. The case was compromised and the son begged pardon from the father. He also promised not to neglect him for the rest of his life .

5. Once a violent quarrel occurred between a father and the son. The father gave a hard blow to his son which caused bleeding. The son was going to inform the police, but the villagers requested him to desist and assured him that justice would be done in the village panchayat. The case was brought before the panchayat ; but as it was an insignificant one, a compromise was effected and the parties had to sign an agreement not to quarrel in future. Failure to keep the agreement made the erring party liable to a fine of Rs. 50.

6. There was a fight between two buffaloes belonging to Johan and Shanti. During the fight the leg of Johan's buffalo was fractured. Johan took the case to the panchayat and claimed damages from Shanti. After a hot discussion, it was decided that half of the price of the buffalo be given to Johan Munda if he wanted to retain it ; otherwise he would get the full price according to the current market value. Johan agreed to retain the buffalo and received half of its value as compensation.

7. Once the mother of Habil Guria stole some paddy from the store of Johan Guria. The son of the owner caught her. Johan reported the matter to the panchayat. When the panchayat met, she was found guilty and was fined Rs. 15 which was the price of one k a t (about a maund) of paddy.

8. Niranjan Topno and Phulmoni Guria fell in love and a child was born of their union. Later on, Niranjan had illicit relations with another girl, Lily Guria, with the result that the latter conceived. Niranjan never told Phulmoni or Lily that he had relations with both of them at the same time. But the secret leaked out and a case was instituted in the village panchayat. The panchayat gave the following verdict.

a. Niranjan had to marry one of the two girls and pay maintenance to the other.

b. As Lily Guria had already conceived through him, she could not be married to any one else. So Niranjan had to marry her.

c. Phulmoni would have the right of full maintenance from Niranjan for herself and her son. Some land was accordingly registered in the name of her son for their maintenance.

d. Phulmoni was permitted to marry any one whom she wished, but would not be able to take her son along with her as he was the legitimate heir of Niranjan.

e. If Niranjan did not have any male issue from Lily Guria in future, the son of Phulmoni would exercise full rights of succession as his legitimate heir.

9. Jusup Guria fell in love with Thibi Lugum and brought her to his own house and began to live with her without the consent of the girl's parents. So her parents brought the case before the panchayat. On enquiry it was found that Jusup and Thibi were found willing to marry each other. The parents could not object to the union, but they were entitled to get the bride-price from Jusup. So Jusup was directed to pay the bride-price, which he did. As it was a happy occasion, the panchayat claimed a feast from Jusup, who later on met the cost of the feast.

10. Once Markas Munda stole into the house of Mansidh at dead of night with the intention of committing adultery with the wife of Mansidh. The woman raised a hue and cry and awoke all the members of her household. Markas Munda was caught and brought before the panchayat. A fine of Rs. 100 was imposed upon him.

11. A woman went to the house of her neighbour to grind millets. After having done her work, she returned to her own home. Meanwhile the woman in the other house discovered that the necklace of her daughter was missing. She suspected that the woman who had come to her house to grind millets had stolen it. She began to abuse that woman loudly. When the latter's husband heard the abuse, he was angry. He approached the former and asked her as to why she was cursing his wife. A hot discussion followed, ending in a scuffle between the two. Ultimately the panchayat was referred to by the parties. Mangra Maharaj, the head of the Guria Parha (federation of villages) presided over the meeting. The old woman was asked to produce evidence about the theft of her daughter's necklace by her neighbour's wife. She could not do so. The complainant was very angry, as he thought that he and his wife had been cursed and maligned for no fault of theirs. The panchayat counselled an agreement between the two. Ultimately both the parties shook hands in front of the assembled gathering. Before the meeting was held, the complainant paid Rs. 1/4 as court fee to the panchayat. Later on, a fine equal to that sum was imposed on the old woman for wrongfully abusing her neighbour and his wife.

Cases between Residents of Two Villages.

Cases which involve people living in two villages or relate to

the infringement of some serious social taboo are dealt with by the Parha panchayat. A Parha is a group of villages belonging to the same clan in this area. Most of the villages in this area are one-clan villages. Koenara is the Maharajgarh or the seat of the head of the Guria Parha. Sixteen villages comprise this Parha, known after the Guria clan. For many years its head has been the octogenarian Mangra Maharaj. The meeting of the Parha is held in the village of the accused. Three recent cases dealt with by the Guria Parha panchayat are given below.

1. Danga and Budhni, both of whom belonged to the same Guria clan, fell in love with each other and wanted to marry. But marriage within the clan is entirely forbidden. When their love became publicly known, a meeting of the Parha was convened at the instance of one of the rajas. The girl Budhni was pregnant. The panchayat came to the decision that when the child would be born it will be entitled to a maintenance allowance of one and a half maunds of paddy per month from Danga. The boy and the girl were asked to separate. But the child of Budhni could not be the legal heir of Danga and, should the former run away, the maintenance allowance would revert to Danga. A fine of Rs. 12/8 was levied on Danga and Budhni respectively. Besides the fine the parties had to feast the members of the panchayat.

2. Another meeting of the Parha panchayat was called recently to decide a land dispute between Daud Guria and his uncle, Tempo Guria. Daud Guria lost his parents at the age of five. He was brought up by his maternal uncle. When he attained majority he was married and claimed a share in the joint property from his uncle. Tempo was in no mood to give any land to Daud, declaring that the latter was not his nephew. Daud requested the Church people to mediate on his behalf, but Tempo did not pay any heed. Daud then approached the missionary at Murhu to intercede, but this was without any result. At last Daud took his complaint to the Parha panchayat. The panchayat ruled that Daud was the nephew of Tempo and was entitled to a share equal to that of his father to which he would have succeeded, had partition taken place in his father's time. Tempo was compelled to give Daud's share from the joint property. Tempo's compliance with the ruling of the Parha panchayat was unwilling and he filed a case in the Government court at Khunti. At Khunti, the decision did not differ from

that of the Parha panchayat. Tempo's disregard of the judgement of the Parha panchayat was regarded as a contempt of court and he was fined Rs. 60.

3. One Luther Bania of Tapkara enticed Pandry Guria of Koenara and began to live with her. When the affair became publicly known, objection was raised by the girl's parents. The girl's father filed a case in Khunti court, where the culprit was fined Rs. 100. After that, Pandry began to live with her parents. When it came to the knowledge of other people of the clan, the father was excommunicated for receiving into his house a daughter who had lived with another person. The father filed a request before the Parha panchayat for receiving them back into the tribal fold. The panchayat decided to turn the girl out of Munda society as she was corrupted. Luther was again fined Rs. 60 for having spoilt the girl. The parents of the girl were then re-admitted to the Munda fold.

Special Cases

Sometimes there are cases in which it is very difficult to come to a decision, or the decision is not obeyed by the guilty parties. In that case, an apeal is made from the Hatu panchayat to the Parha Panchayat. But if the latter fail to enforce a decision, a joint meeting of several Parhas takes place. Such a joint meeting held a two-day session at Gandauli on the 14th and 15th of March, 1956. Below is a description of the details of the case, as well as the proceedings of the joint meeting.

Yusuf Dahanga and Albina Dahanga, both of whom belonged to one clan, were accused of incest in village Gandauli. The village panchayat could not pronounce any judgement as Yusuf did not admit his guilt. At the Parha level, too, Yusuf did not make any admission. Ultimately the head of the Dahanga Parha requested the heads of Guria and Kongari Parhas to attend a joint meeting for deciding the case. Guria Maharaj could not attend, but sent his deputy, Paulus Guria, the Raja of Kalet, at the head of a delegation of ten members. Seven representatives, came from the Kongari Parha, six from Kandulana, five from Topno, two from Lugum and one each from Hembrom, Horo and Champi. All the office-bearers of the Dahanga Parha panchayat were present.

At the outset, Barnabas Kongari was appointed as the President and Paulus Guria, the Vice-President of the joint meeting. Augustine Dahanga was nominated Secretary to the conference, When the session started, some procedural rules were announced by Paulus, the acting President. The court fee was fixed at Rs. 15, which was paid promptly. The boy and the girl were then cross-examined after the administration of an oath. After the latter's statement was over, her thumb impression was taken on paper. The boy on examination flatly denied the allegation. Two witnesses produced by the boy's side were examined by the court. On the day following, the girl was examined by all members. Thereafter the boy was again examined. It was evident from the statements of the boy that he was telling a lie. All his answers were vague. An old person was fined twenty rupees for giving false evidence in the case. In the end, the President posed two alternatives before the boy. Either he should accept his guilt or should declare that he did not care for the Parha or his fellow villagers. If he chose the latter course, he would be turned out from the village and would be denied protection of the tribal law. After this the culprit admitted his guilt before the assembly and prayed for forgiveness. Now it was the duty of the Court to punish the culprit. Punishments awarded previously by each Parha for clan incest were examined and it was ultimately decided that the scale of punishment prevailing in Guria Parha should be awarded. The following fine was imposed on the boy :

Cash fine	Rs. 25
Rice	3 maunds
Pulses	5 seers
1 goat or big pig.	

The girl was sentenced to pay a fine amounting to half of the boy's fine. They were also asked to cease to have further connection with each other.

Both parties paid the fine promptly. Thereafter, the Court decided on the future of the unborn child. If a son was born to Albina he was to be provided with don (fertile low-lying rice land) in which one-maund of paddy seedlings could be sown and tanr (not so fertile upland, fit for other crops) in which half a maund of seedlings could be sown. In case a daughter was born, she was to be maintained out of the produce of the land. After

her marriage, the land would revert to Yusuf Dahanga. The members of the panchayat went to see the lands and transfer deeds were prepared accordingly.

Thus ended a difficult case in which the co-operation not only of members of one clan was required, but that of the entire neighbourhood. It was under the pressure of strong public opinion and on pain of excommunication that the accused admitted his guilt and allowed the Parha panchayat to play their part in meeting the ends of justice.

Observations

A review of the working of the judicial system of Koenara reveals certain important features of the political system of Munda which they have retained up to modern times.

1. Like all peoples, the Mundas are sometimes involved in offences of diverse kinds and have to punish the culprits. They have from very ancient times a judicial system through which it is possible to dispense justice speedily and effectively.

2. If a party is dissatisfied with the findings of one court, appeal may be preferred to a higher court.

3. Contact with Government courts has acquainted some people with the procedure therein. Such procedures have been adopted in the Parha courts.

4. The verdict of the traditional courts is generally acceptable to the people at large, because those who sit in judgement are people who command respect and confidence and whose office does not depend on election. Village leaders and Parha leaders can therefore give impartial judgement without caring for the favour or frown of the powers that be.

5. Now-a-days, through contact with outsiders, certain people have been found to give false evidence and make false statements even on oath. It is evident that the fear of retribution is growing less and less.

6. The Munda do not relish interference with their traditional institutions, and it is better that they should be left alone

and even strengthened in suitable cases. Instead of establishing new elective panchayats, the Government should strengthen the existing institutions not only for judicial administration, but also as an instrument of village welfare activities.

7. Hatu and Parha panchayats are not in decay as is generally supposed, at least in some areas. They are highly effective and influential bodies, and the villagers of Koenara prided themselves on the fact that few cases go to police stations or law courts from that area.

The importance of the Parha system in mobilizing public opinion among the villagers has been realized by political parties in Chotanagpur. Now-a-days, Parhas do not meet only to try cases but also to discuss ways and means for their own uplift and to air their grievances or to hear political leaders. It is time that Government realized the importance of these bodies and utilized them for promoting welfare work among the tribal peoples. By working through traditional organizations, Government could gain the confidence of the tribal people, and by doing so, some of the most pressing problems of Chotanagpur would lend themselves to an easier solution.

BITLAHA

How a tribal people and their institutions react under the impact of other cultures can be seen with reference to the Santals. For over one hundred years now the Santals have been living under the provincial administration. In the beginning they came into contact with the administration to a very small extent as police powers had been left to village headmen or *Manjhi* and divisional headmen or *Parganaits*. Village *panchayats* continued to work satisfactorily and appeals against its decisions lay in the council of Pargana. The highest court was the *Hunt Council* before which very important cases and matters of dispute between villages and Parganas were placed. Social offences continued to be dealt with in the traditional way. Gradually due to the working of various forces tribal village headmen began to lose respect and authority and signs of decay in the headman system came to be discerned by competent observers. Lately police stations have been established even in the Damin* areas and the headmen and the *Parganaits'* absolute police powers are disappearing. While the trial of ordinary cases has either passed to government sponsored *gram-panchayat* or to the police stations, certain grievous social offences are still dealt with by the old tribal authorities. In carrying on this traditional operation tribal authorities come into contact with the local administration.

Prelude to Bitlaha

When a crime has been committed by a Santal in contravention of the tribal code its punishment varies with the nature of the offence. The great majority of the crimes are comparatively minor and the sentence is a fine which rarely exceeds twenty or twenty-five rupees. But in case of a clan or kin incest and of sexual intercourse with *Dikus*, of eating with forbidden kinsmen or touching tabooed relatives, the crimes are major. They excite intense and angry disapproval of the tribe or community as a whole and the sentence is either a fine or full and immediate outcasting followed by the ceremony of *Bitlaha*.

When a case of clan or kin incest is detected the matter is considered at a village meeting. There are two circumstances which may lead to a meeting. The first is when a complaint is made to the *Manjhi* either by a villager or the *Manjhi* himself learns of the offence. The other circumstance is when a boy or girl is surprised either by relations or by villagers in an act of illegal or clandestine intercourse. When villagers are assembled their first thought is the procedure for settling the issue and if the matter is in its infancy or is known only to themselves, they often try to dispose of it in the village. Moreover there is often great reluctance to expose the offenders to the full publicity of *Bitlaha* and unless the offence is serious, the villagers are often inclined to adjudicate it themselves. If the crime is admitted or proved, the village then considers the attitude of the parties. If the offence is only a temporary lapse and the parties do not intend to repeat it, the village may administer a warning and inflict a petty fine. If, however, the village is annoyed or outraged by their conduct, the authorities often take a grave view and proceed to take drastic action. When a *Bitlaha* is decided upon by the village council the first step is to secure tribal approval to the staging of the *Bitlaha* operations. The village headmen must first inform the *Parganait* and tell him of the village recommendation and then request him to summon a meeting of five *Manjhis.* This body acts as a revising authority and until it has met and confirmed the village decision, no *Bitlaha* can correctly take place. By analogy it may be said that just as a death sentence by a session judge cannot be executed until it has been confirmed by the High Court, so also *Bitlaha* cannot properly be performed until the five *Manjhis* have tested its propriety and signified their consent. Now-a-days the administration takes the view that once the *'Disum Hor'* (Standing for the tribal meet) have decided on a *Bitlaha,* it should be allowed to take place. After that the convention is to take the permission of the Sub-Divisional Officer for this procedure. On receiving such an application the Sub-Divisional Officer at once starts a Revenue miscellaneous case and enquires if the proposed *Bitlaha* has the consent of the *Disum Hor* and other allied bodies and after fully satisfying himself that the *Bitlaha* is justified and has been conceived according to custom and customary procedure, gives the necessary permission.

The administration takes the view that *Bitlaha* cannot be

performed on a non-Santal or a Christian Santal. A Christian is governed by the Christian code and the tribal custom of *Bitlaha* cannot therefore be applied against a Christian. When a *Bitlaha* is proposed to be done against a non-Santal or a Christian Santal the organisers are informed that this cannot be done without orders of the government.

BITLAHA OPERATIONS

The *Bitlaha* is carried out on a day fixed by the *'Disum Hor'* after the approval of the S.D.O. is obtained. Then the *'Dharwak'* signal issues calling upon the Santals to assemble for the *Bitlaha*. In the early morning of the appointed day the men gather with flutes, drums, bows and arrows a short way near the end of the village street where the offender lives. Youths compose obscene songs in which the offender is mentioned by name and his sin is described in great detail. This is accompanied by loud drumming so that the noise is heard for miles around. At a sign from the leader the crowd with wild shouts and raised hands holding a bow or some other article rush to the village beating the drums and blowing their flutes singing the obsence songs of ridicule as they enter the street. If the headman of the village meets the gathering on the outskirts to the street with water in a *lota* or pot, people will stop singing. When they reach the house of the offender, they take a pole or bamboo or the like to which they have tied a short churned bit of firewood, a worn out broom and some used-up leaf plates and fix it at the entrance of the courtyard. In the courtyard the fireplace is broken as also the cooking pots etc., while some youngmen strip naked and commit nuisance in and around the house. They thus desecrate the entire surroundings. The scene is at times revolting and women generally leave the village in which *Bitlaha* takes place. Sometimes the Santals carry *Bitlaha* operations to excess and are satisfied only after destroying all property and razing the house of the offender to the ground.

JOM JATI OR READMISSION OF THE OUTCAST

Persons against whom *Bitlaha* is carried out are debarred from eating with others and specially from getting their children married and have to suffer a good deal. The parents

on both sides should be outcasted and if any one receives the outcast in his house, the whole house will suffer in the same way. 'Villagers have also to suffer to a certain extent with the outcasted ones. They therefore harrass the offenders in many ways so as to make them either runaways or take steps to bring them back into society. Persons outcasted because of sexual intercourse with people of another tribe or caste are not admitted to the tribal fold, but leave the village. If the relatives of the prohibited degree have had sexual intercourse they will generally, if they fear detection, clear out before *Bitlaha* takes place and settle in a place where they are not known. This happens with people who have no stake in the village. The outcasted peopie who continue to live in the village are generally well-to-do. It is they who can afford the luxury of being taken into society again. This is done by a ceremony called *Jom Jati*. The person outcasted first of all gives his old ways. This is the pre-requisite before beginning the operations. Then he provides the necessary funds. He tells the *Manjhi* of his readiness for the ceremony. The *Manjhi* informs the *Parganait* who makes it known to twelve other *Parganaits*. A big feast takes place on the day fixed for the purification ceremony. The outcasted man goes out to the end of the village street with a cloth twisted round his neck. This is possibly symbolic expression of the fact that he is willing to be led or is prepared to follow the dictates of the elders. He carries a *lota* full of water and must look miserable and downcast. The most venerable *Parganait* present says to his colleagues; "Come let us comfort him; it is a pity to see him." The repentent sinner says, "Father I have sinned grievously. I acknowledge my transgression. Have pity on me" The venerable *Parganait* (formerly it was the privilege of a man of the *Murmu* clan) takes the *lota* from the hands of the man, pays obeisance to the Sungod and says to the outcast, "Since you have acknowledged this transgression we do now take and carry all that from you." He then takes a little of the water and rinses his mouth with it and passes the *lota* round to all the leading men who do the same. After this they enter the village and courtyard of the outcast who himself washes the feet of the leaders of the people. All then sit down in rows to eat, leaf plates being put before them. The outcast serves them all, personally gives them rice and curry and put Rs. 5/- on the plate of every *Parganait* and on that of the *Manjhi* of

the village and Re. 1/- on the plate of every other *Manjhi*. From that day his pollution is washed away. The old *Parganait* declares: "From to-day we shall drink a cup of water from his hands; we shall also smoke his tobacco pipe; we shall give him our daughters in marriage and also take his daughters for our sons. If after to-day any one talks about this matter or speaks evil we shall fine him a hundred rupees and order feast for a hundred more." Thereupon they dig a small hole in which they bury a lump of cowdung and put a stone on top, thereby symbolising that the matter is buried for ever. Thus the outcast becomes a Santal again.

BITLAHA AND THE ADMINISTRATION

If the *Bitlaha* is contemplated without the prior sanction of the S.D.O. it is stopped with the help of the police. If the *'Dharwak'* has already been circulated without the permission of the *'Disum Hor'* steps are taken for his immediate recall. If despite this people assemble for *Bitlaha* the S.D.O. tries to prevent it by means of the force at his disposal. The police first tries to argue with people and dissuades them from joining the *Bitlaha* and if they persist they may put them under preventive detention. Now-a-days the executive takes the view that in course of desecration of the house of the offender, no damage to the house or household articles should be permitted. Tribal custom is not codified and this interpretation is not generally palatable to the ordinary tribesman who in his exuberance forgets his own limits. For this the transgressors become liable to the ordinary law of the land, *i.e.*, disposal of unlawful assembly by force and criminal prosecution for trespass, arson or mischief. It may lead to large scale arrests and the imposition of collective fines.

The administration has taken steps to guard against excesses in course of a *Bitlaha*. Only urinating in the courtyard of the offender is permitted by law. Destruction of property is forbidden. Vigorous propaganda has been taken up on behalf of the executive that *Bitlaha* must be performed in a peaceful manner as sanctioned by custom and nothing beyond usual dancing and urinating should be done. In one case the crowd indulged in arson. To curb this sort of lawlessness and barbarity the government imposed collective fine on the area.

Bitlaha is frequently performed in Santal Parganas. In the month of June 1954 during which I visited the area as many as five *Bitlahas* were performed.

On May 14, 1954 a *Bitlaha* was performed in village Pokharia, Police station, Shikaripara, 17 miles from Dumka on the way to Rampurhat. The cause of the *Bitlaha* was illicit connection between the daughter and brother's son of one Nunka Soren. Inspite of persuasion by police and magistrates the *Bitlaha* took place but in an ordinary fashion, there being no loss or damage to property.

In the Damin area near Sahebganj in North-Eastern Santal Parganas a big *Bitlaha* was performed in the last week of May 1954. The cause of the *Bitlaha* was the abduction of a Paharia girl by a Momin. The girl was abducted with the connivance of her uncle. On the matter being reported to Santals of the neighbouring villages by the girl's mother, the latter decided to perform *Bitlaha*. They demolished the house of the abductor and cut down some trees belonging to him. The *Bitlaha* took place under the supervision of the magistrates who effected later on the arrest of the three trouble makers, the abductor, his father and the girl's uncle.

In the village of Jermundi, 16 miles west of Dumka two persons of the same clan were suspected to be having illicit relations. On coming to know of it, the *Manjhi* decided on *Bitlaha* but was prevented by others as definite proof was lacking. The *Manjhi* was on the look out for such a proof. One night when the boy entered the house of the girl at dead of night, the *Manjhi* lay in wait with some other persons. When the couple were through the act they were bound with the cot in the same posture. The decision for *Bitlaha* was taken. Permission was sought from the S.D.O. who tried to dissuade persons from committing the *Bitlaha* by promising to punish the culprit. Later on by the machinations of the village faction opposed to the headman, the *Manjhi* and his accomplices were chargesheeted under section 354 of the I.P.C. for outraging the modesty of a woman.

On the 23rd June 1954 a *Bitlaha* was threatened in a village near Jamamour. People were determined to hold

Bitlaha even though permission had not been given by *'Disom Hor'* and the S.D.O. The man and woman who were the cause of *Bitlaha* belonged to the Tudu clan. By proceeding in the matter with a good deal of tact people were turned away for the place of *Bitlaha* and so it did not come off.

Thus we see that at times *Bitlaha* can take a very violent form and it leads to a panic among the non-Santals. But with sympathetic officers who have an insight into Santal character and institutions, *Bitlaha* can be prevented totally or even if allowed to take place may be conducted peacefully with the minimum of disturbance to village life.

Now-a-days politics has entered the institution of the *Bitlaha.* At times it is staged on flimsy and imagined grounds, It is specially used by politicians for creating hatred between the Santals and non-Santals. Sometimes *Bitlaha* is resorted to for getting rid of a *gharjamai* by inplicating him with a girl of his own clan in the village. This is the role of an old tribal institution in the changing social setup.

A VILLAGE THAT CHOSE PROGRESS*

This study was made in Kullu, an Oraon village in the Mandar C. D. Block of the Ranchi District. The nearest rail-head Nagjua eight miles south of the village is a small station on the Ranchi-Lohardaga metre gauge line. There is no road connecting Kullu with Nagjua and one has to walk through agricultural fields on narrow embankments besides crossing one hillock and two streams. Sons, an important market place on the Ranchi-Lohardaga road is nearly ten miles north from the village. This path is cut up by two rivulets and one river, the South Koel. The village can be reached by Jeep from the Block headquarters at Mandar during fair weather, the distance of eighteen miles being covered in two hours. During the rains the village is well nigh inaccessible and it is extremely difficult to reach any supplies there.

The choice of this village was dictated by several factors. Firstly, the village is still comparatively isolated and removed from the main lines of communication. Secondly, it is a traditional village and change is not directly visible to casual observer. Thirdly, the community feeling in the village is very strong even though the fountain head of this unity is not the traditional headman. It is a story of the impact of new ideas and forms on the old order of things. It is the forging of a new synthesis between the old and the new without any emotional disturbance or turmoil in the inter-group behavioural pattern. It is the saga of the emergence of a new leadership which welcomes development activities with open heart and without reservation.

This is a case study but it may be symptomatic of many other villages in tribal India.

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The village consists of 105 families out of which 58 are Oraon, 16 are Munda, 1 is Lohra, 4 are Panr and 4 are Mahli 20 belong to other castes and 2 are Muslims. The total population is 568 out of whom 101 are literate. The total area of the village is 939.60 acres of which 578.96 is under the plough.

II

Culture change is a continuous process. For purposes of this study the description of Oraon villages given in the books of S. C. Roy has been taken as the bench mark data. Until recently there were only three agencies of culture change in Kullu. There is an old Lower Primary School in the village which generally had a non-tribal teacher. He brought with him alien ways and customs, more or less remained aloof from the villagers whom he considered uncultured and below his standard. He never exercised any influence in village affairs. Consciously or unconsciously he made an impact on the life of the young children in his charge as they gradually imbibed his values, attitudes and habits. As the schooling, however, did not exceed three to four years, these newly affected notions wore off to large extent leaving faint impressions. Only those boys who went to school in other villages after passing the lower primary standard for longer periods did assume a more lasting air or refinement. Thus, the village school did not serve as a potent instrument of culture change.

The village has eight families of converted Oraon. Christianity is not more than three generations old. All the Christians in this village belong to G. E. L. Mission. It is the oldest mission in Chotanagpur. It was the first to Indianise its rank and file and there is not a single foreign missionary in its fold. There is no Church in this village. In two of neighbouring villages there are small Churches. It is there that Christians from this village go for their Sunday service. The pastor in both cases is a tribal. He does not visit this village. This mission gives utmost freedom to its adherants to follow their own manners and customs. Missionaries have not influenced the general tenor of life in the village. Unlike other village there is no mark distinction between Christians and non-Christians in this village. Nor do we find two factions

in the village, one consisting of the Christians and the other of the Non-Christians.

The annual exodus to the brick kilns of Calcutta and to the tea gardens of Assam and North Bengal is a more important factor of culture change. Every year about one hundred to one hundred and fifty men and women go out after the harvesting of paddy in November and come back in April or May. In these months each person is able to save on the average Rs. 100 out of which he meets his major requirements of cash such as the land revenue, clothes, repayment of loans, etc. Sheikh Sabar Ali repaid loans to the extent of Rs. 500 left by his father by serving in the brick kilns for twelve years continuously. During this period he gave his lands for share-cropping. Hosen Pahan went out every year regularly for twenty-two years. He does not go now as he does not feel strong enough for those arduous jobs. The work in the brick kilns is so hard that most of them would close down if tribal labour is not available. While returning all people bring not only clothes but certain fancy goods. Even if they do not bring anything, their mental horizon is enlarged and their level of aspirations goes up. They see the world outside and this annual outing relieves them of the monotony of living in the villages and many people revealed that they go out not because they need money or cannot find work at home but because they love their sojourn outside. Anonymity in an alien setting gives them unbriddled freedom to live as they like.

Most of the villagers attend weekly markets held in neighbouring villages. In these markets they sell their surplus produce as well procure articles of necessity like salt, Kerosene oil, earthenware, iron implements, etc. Womenfolk buy cheap trinkets, bangles, etc. On one corner of such a market there is a drinking booth where there is generally a large crowd. The market is not only a place for commercial transactions but for social meet also. Men and women meet old friends and make new ones. For young lovers the market is a popular rendezvous. Many shopkeepers come from Ranchi by bus or truck with their wares. The Oraon come into contact with these non-tribal business men and gradually learn the

language and ways of the latter. The markets which are frequented by the people of Kullu are the following:—

Place of market.	Distance and direction from Kullu.	Day on which held.
(1) Sons	10 miles north	Monday
(2) Narkopi	7 miles east	Sunday and Wednesday
(3) Byasi	3 miles south	Friday
(4) Silagain	3 miles east	Saturday
(5) Bhandra	8 miles west	Tuesday
(6) Kurkura	5 miles east	Thursday

The most effective medium of culture change is the community development programme. Kullu is situated in an area where the programme has been in operation from 1952. During the Project period, however, no impact was felt in the village as it was situated in an inaccessible corner and the area of coverage was very large. It was only when Mandar became a separate Block in 1955 that this village came to be visited by Community Development personnel. Silagain, a village three miles east of Kullu was made a Village Level Workers' headquarters. As the V. L. W. had difficulty in securing residential accommodation in Silagain, the headquarters was shifted to Kullu in 1958. From 1958 onwards, Kullu has been the focus of attention of the V. L. W. and villagers can get his help and guidance on any matter they like.

The programme touches mainly the economic and the political aspects of culture. Its impact in the economic sphere is felt on agriculture, animal husbandry, co-operation, income of people, role of money, etc. In the sphere of political relations the establishment of the statutory Panchayats has affected the existing balance of power in the village. Certain social institutions have lost their importance and new functionaries have gained an accession of prestige. The roles of the Police, traditional Panchayat and the traditional headman have been greatly affected by the recent changes.

III

In the social sphere the most significant change has been total disappearance of the youth dormitory or the Jonkh Erpa

and Pel Erpa. Till twelve years back both these institutions were active and the Christian Mukhia of the village recalled the days he spent in the dormitory. A notable feature of the dormitory was that the membership included not only Oraon, but Munda, Gorait, Dusadh, Muslim boys. Thirty girls of the village who used to sleep in the house of a widow constituted the Pel Erpa. Dances were held almost everyday in the village Akhra or dancing ground. The boys used to spend their evening in telling stories, solving riddles, singing songs and dancing. Even now dancing goes on in the Akhra every alternate evening with enthusiasm though the Jonkh Erpa does not exist.

After sometime due to apathy and ridicule of the non-tribals people lost interest in the youth dormitory and its building fell into disuse and disrepair. In recent years the interest in youth dormitory has been revived and the Mukhia of the statutory Panchayat, Simon Panna has already started construction work on behalf of the Panchayat. The re-appearance of this useful traditional institution is a welcome feature.

IV

A peep inside a house would reveal the many new things the villagers have begun using. Most of the people now use alluminium utensils for cooking food. For plates and dishes they have brass utensils. In many houses we find cups and saucers as well as glass tumblers. Some people have cane stools, others have wooden chairs for sitting. Cots are found in almost all houses. Looking glass, combs and washing soaps are found in some houses. Among the new musical instruments mention may be made of Shahnai and Gramophone which are hired at the time of marriage. These days a good many people gather every evening to listen the radio which is kept in the house of the Mukhia. There are five cycles in the village. This has increasel the mobility of their owners.

In the economic sphere change has been most significant in the realm of agriculture. Formerly people used poor seed. They have now been supplied improved seed for various crops. Seed multiplication is also going on in the village, the Mukhia

being an 'A' class registered grower. In this village no one practised transplanting method or 'Ropa' in paddy cultivation. They are familiar with 'Buna' or broadcasting seeds in dry upland fields or 'Lewa' of broadcasting in muddy fields. Four of the cultivators in the village have taken up the Japanese method of paddy cultivation in a small portion of their fields. The reasons for the slow progress of this method are many. The first difficulty is the lie of the land. Most of the fields are uplands where water does not stay long. Secondly, the cost of the labour employed at the time of transplanting is enormous. To this is added the expenditure on the drink party to which all the villagers have to be invited on the day 'Ropa' is done. Chemical fertilizers have to be put in the fields in sufficient quantity. This requires ready cash which is generally difficult to collect. People regard these fertilizers as intoxicants for the soil. The yield goes up temporarily, but ultimately the inherent fertility of the soil goes down. Cowdung and compost are different as they enrich the soil permanently.

Among green manures Sanai has proved more useful than Dhaincha. Four or five cultivators have taken to Sanai now. Compost is a popular manure. It has been used for a long time. Now compost is being made on a scientific basis. There are 118 compost pits in the village. Some persons like Mundla Ekka have undergone a week's training in compost-making. Villagers have taken the compost programme in the right earnest as they regard it as the best kind of manure which does permanent good to the soil. The sale of fertilizers is confined to a few progressive agriculturists. The number of its users is increasing. Between the period 1958 and 1961, 24 maunds of ammonium sulphate, 13 maunds super phosphate, 4 maunds of bone-meal and 24 maunds of cakes made of Karanj and Mahua seeds have been consumed in the village. One or two cultivators are so enthusiastic about fertilizers that they make purchases from weekly markets. This year a co-operative society has been formed in the village. It is a multipurpose society, but its main function hitherto has been the sale of chemical fertilizers.

The V. L. W. has introduced some new crops and some fruit plants. Rainy potato was not known in the village before. Four cultivators have taken it up this year. Sugarcane has

been planted by five persons. Groundnut and sweet peas have also been introduced by the Block authorities. Among fruit trees mention may be made of papaya, lichi, mango, guava and lemon. Papaya and guava grown in the village are sold in the neighbouring weekly markets. These new crops and fruits have gone a long way in enhancing the income of some agriculturists.

People are very tardy in taking advantage of the offer of the Block authorities for digging irrigation wells. Only two such wells have been dug. One drinking water well has also been constructed.

Only four persons keep improved poultry, but it does not seem to have added to their income except in a very small way. A pedigree bull has been given to the Mukhia from the Block for servicing local cows.

The main occupation of the villagers continues to be agriculture. Paddy, wheat, maize, sugarcane, gram, spices like Dhania and a number of green vegetables are the main crops. A number of subsidiary crafts are carried on in the village. The family of Lohars produce all the iron implements required for the village and sell the surplus in the nearby markets. The four families of Panrs weave the cloth. Similarly the four families of Mahli carry on their traditional craft. Baldeo Ahir and Rameshwar Bania make 'Sika' (from rope) for carrying loads. Halim Sheikh makes tiles which he sells at the rate of Rs. 25 per thousand. Oraon women make palm leaf mats for their own use as well as for sale. Bomboo-ware such as umbrella, winnowing fan and baskets needed for the villagers are locally produced. Everyone knows how to make cots. The Oraon do not purchase them in the market.

Barter is no longer employed as a method of exchange. It is, however, possible to purchase anything with paddy. Vegitables and earthen utensils are generally paid for in paddy. Wages for agricultural labour may be paid in paddy or in cash. For hiring a labourer with a bullock, the charge of Rs. 2 per day has to be paid in cash. When people go to a weekly market they do not take money, but some surplus produce which they sell and with the money they get, purchase the things they need. The habit of keeping ready money has not yet been

formed. Money is needed for the purchase of cloth, mustard or kerosene oil, sugar, salt, spices, tabacco, biri, soap and soda, cosmetics, coal for making bricks, seeds of potato, onion and radish, etc., rope, medicines and cooking utensils.

Everyone realises the value of money and its importance in raising the social status of a person. There are five or six persons in the village who have been able to prosper and have attained a high status even though they were not well-off in the beginning. By perseverance and skilful handling of their resources, they have improved not only their economic position, but also their political stature in the affairs of the village.

Co-operation in agricultural activities is still very much in vogue. This takes two forms, 'Maddati' and 'Badlaiya Maddati'. In Maddati, anyone can take help from any number of persons he wants in his fields. In the evening he gives them food and rice-beer. No payment is made and this distinguishes it from employment of labourers. In 'Badlaiya Maddati' no food or rice-beer is served. During agricultural operations, it is expected that all persons would work on each other's fields on an exchange basis.

V

Change in the realm of belief and ritual are not very marked. This may be best studied with reference to sacred geography, sacred performances and sacred specialist. The Oraon still confine all worship performed on behalf of the entire village such as Sarhul to the *Sarna* or the sacred grove. Some new places of worship are reserved for the newly introduced festivals. Ram Navami Puja marking the birthday of Ram is performed in the village. It is expected to bring happiness to all the villagers. Associated with it is the taking out of a procession with the figure of Hanuman on flags. It is known as Mahabiri Jhanda procession. This festival is very popular in Chotanagpur.

In the month of Asarh or July, worship is offered to Brahma Devata whose seat is said to be near the Kullu hill. The only offering he receives is the milk of a black cow. This worship is supposed to make the villages free from attacks by wild animals coming down from the hill.

There is a Devi Mandap near the pond in the village. On the seventh day of lighted fortnight of the month of 'Sravana', the Devi is worshipped with the offering of milk and vermilion. Later on a goat is also sacrificed and portions of the sacramental meat are distributed among the villagers. All the families contribute towards the expenses of this worship.

The most important Oraon festival is the Karma celebrated in the month of September. It is mainly a dance festival and the enthusiasm of villagers on this occasion is unbounded. Tribals and non-tribals vie with each other in mirth, dance and drinking.

Durga Puja is performed with great eclat by the tribals and non-tribals. Tribal women fast for the whole day. Buffaloes and goats are sacrificed in the afternoon and the sacrificial meat is distributed among all participants. Some Hindus call a Brahmin resident in the village to perform the worship in the traditional way. This worship is expected to keep family members away from any kind of harm. The day following Diwali is observed as Kartik. On that day the cattle are bathed, oiled, decorated and worshipped. Some Oraon have also begun observing Chattha in the month of November.

Khalihani Puja is held after the rice harvest. The village priest or Pahan sacrifices twelve hens contributed by the villagers. Later on small pieces of meat are distributed among the people. In the month of January, a worship is performed to ward off small pox epidemic. Even though people are now taking vaccination, this worship is prevalent. The boundary deity of the village known as Pachferwa Devata is worshipped with the sacrifice of twelve hens. This is supposed to check the advent of epidemics in the village.

The faith of people in which finders and spirit-doctors like Mati and Ojha is going down with the growth of medical facilities in the village. Belief in witchcraft has still a hold on the people though they are now ashamed to admit it. About ten years back the mother of Hosen Pahan was declared to be a witch by the diviner. She was held responsible for the death of a number of men and animals. She was severely bitten and turned out of the village under the orders of the traditional Panchayat.

The village priest of this village known as the Pahan is a Munda. The Pahan is selected every three years through the process of 'Pairnega' from the Pahan lineage. It shows that the Munda were the founders of the village from where they were largely displaced by the Oraon. As the Munda were acquainted with the local spirits a Munda remained as the Pahan. Besides offering worship on behalf of the entire village, he is also ex-officio president of the traditional Panchayat or the Akhra Panchayat. In olden days he was the secular as well as the sacerdotal headman of the village. Tradition was so strong that in a predominantly Oraon village, a Munda was allowed to remain at the helm of affairs. The Pahan enjoys rent free service land. There is no post of Mahto or secular headman in this village. That such a post never existed is shown by the fact that there is no Mohta land in this village. The assistant of Pahan is called the Pujar. He officiates at the sacrifices in the absence of the Pahan and helps him in every way. The third sacred specialist is the village Gorait who is a Mahli. He beats the drum at the time of worship. He gets about five seers of paddy from each family every year for his services.

VI

Before the introduction of the statutory Panchayats in 1952, influence and authority rested with the Pahan, the traditional Panchayat and the village Chowkidar Deman Ram. The traditional Panchayat did not have any fixed membership. All adult males of the village could attend its session. All disputes were referred to this body which met at the dancing ground of the village. Its president is the Pahan. The Pahan decided cases with the help and advice of the Pujar and other elders of the village. The punishment was generally a fine which was used for feasting and drinking. An analysis of eighteen cases decided by the traditional Panchayat during recent years reveals the following kinds of cases:—

(*a*) Arising out of moral offences	...	13
(*b*) Clash between two persons of the same village	...	3
(*c*) Poisoning	...	1
(*d*) Clash between persons belonging to two villages		1
Total	...	18

In almost all these cases either compromise was effected between the disputants or fines levied on the culprits. In all cases of moral offences heavy fines were imposed and only then the sexual union was sanctioned by the Panchayat. There were two cases of marriage between an Oraon and a Munda and one of marriage between an Oraon and an Ahir girl.

The new statutory Panchayat did not have jurisdiction over social offences. So the Akhra Panchayat continues to hold sitting when such cases come up.

The other person who wielded influence and power in the village was Deman Ram, the Chowkidar. He is the lowest representative of the Police. It is his duty to report all happenings to the Police-Station at Mander when he goes there for his weekly attendance. He used to entangle many persons in the village in fictitious cases and was instrumental in bringing Policemen to the village for fleecing people. He was an engine of oppression and prided in the reflected glory of the Police whom he represented. People were afraid of the Police and in olden days the sight of the red turban made people flee from the village. There were many cases in which the Police threatened to arrest people. It was only on heavy payment that they were saved. Certain people were financially ruined by the machinations of the Police. It was possible for Deman Ram to get anything done by threatening to invite the Police.

Change began in 1952 with the formation of the statutory Panchayat. In that election one Yogendra Purani, a Brahman of this village and Simon Panna, an educated Christian Oraon became members of the Panchayat executive. In the Judicial wing Santosh Panna and Mahesh Ram, a Harijan were elected. In 1955 besides Yogendra Purani and Simon Panna, Mangra Oraon and Shaikh Sabar Ali entered in executive. Being an educated Oraon, Simon Panna was able to pull his weight with the villagers which was not possible before. In the third election in 1960 he was elected Mukhia of the Panchayat consisting of eight villages. In the next executive, the traditional headman of the village, the Pahan also came in. Shaikh Sabar Ali a shrewd backward Muslim and Murla Ekka, an Oraon ex-Army man also figured in the executive. The

Shaikh had lived in Calcutta working in brick kilns for twelve long years. The Pahan had all the weight of traditional authority and prestige. Murla Ekka was widely travelled man and was respected by all. These three for reasons of their own hitched their wagons to the rising star, the new Mukhia.

The first man to be affected by the new set up was the Chowkidar. He found that he could not call the Police at the slightest pretext. Ordinary disputes were taken to the statutory Panchayat. People did not have to go to courts for minor things. Simon Panna exhorted people to shed their fear of the Police and not to offer them illegal gratifications. For sometime the Chowkidar tried to incite people against Simon and remained aloof and sullen. Simon, however, always displayed friendly behaviour towards his erstwhile adversary. The Chowkidar has now come round and accepted the present scheme of things. He has started co-operating with the Mukhia.

Whenever the Block authorities introduce new measures the Mukhia is the first person to accept them. He was the first man to use chemical fertilizers in his fields. After sometime others followed suit. He was also the first to begin Japanese method of paddy cultivation in his fields. Later on others took it up. Formerly when Block Extension Officers came to the village, they were viewed with distrust and indifference and people were adverse to accept any scheme even though during the Project period many things were offered free or for meagre contribution. Now under the Mukhia's leadership, they were taking up development schemes suited to their needs and resources.

Earlier people had to go to Mandar, the Block headquarters for the revenue or mutation cases. The Mukhia invited the B. D. O. with his staff to camp in the village for three days. The cases were settled to the satisfaction of all concerned. Due to his influence with the Block staff the Mukhia has gained an accession of prestige. He is always ready to oblige others with advice or help even if it might necessitate going to Mandar or Ranchi. The Sarpanch of the Panchayat, Ismail Shaikh of the neighbouring village of Byasi is jealous of the new importance of the Mukhia. His complaint is that the Mukhia does not allow cases to come up before the judicial wing of the Panchayat and

settles them himself informally. The result is that since 1956 till date only four cases have come up before the Panchayat.

The Panchayat runs a graingola from which paddy is loaned out to needy persons for seed for consumption at a low rate of interest. Formerly, people had to run to money-lenders for this purpose. Since 1955, the Panchayat has been entrusted with the collection of land revenue. During the year 1960-61, it collected more than Rs. 4,000 on this account. This year due to new mutation and rent fixation, land revenue of this Panchayat is expected to go up to Rs. 6,000. The Panchayat is entitled to receive a commission of 10 per cent on its total collection. Since May, 1956 the management and protection of 68 squire miles of forest has also been handed over to the Panchayat.

The Panchayat has been active in the sphere of public health. In the year 1959-60, 213 people were inoculated against cholera and 142 people were vaccinated against small-pox in Kullu. Six wells in the village were also cleaned with D. D. T.

Through the efforts of the Panchayat a post office has been opened in Byasi, a village three miles from Kullu. The villagers are greatly benefited due to this. This Panchayat has also got a radio from the Public Relations Department by paying Rs. 108.50 P.

All the people in the village are very happy with the improvements in the village and take pride in the fact that it is man from Kullu who is at the helm of affairs in the Panchayat. They are grateful to the Mukhiya for giving them ponds, bunds and roads. The V. L. W. and the Panchayat Sevak work under his direction. He gets full co-operation from them in all ways. No factions exist in the village. Simon Panna is the undisputed leader of all communities, tribals, converted and unconverted Hindus and Muslims.

People of Kullu have voted in two general elections. In the first election not even 30 per cent of the electorate went to polls. In the second general elections people had been asked to vote for the party of 'Adivasis' or Jharkhand party. They turned up in large numbers. They had been asked to put their ballot

papers in the box marked with the figure of the cock. But when they went inside the polling booth most of them became nervous and dropped the ballot papers here and there. A large number of votes were cancelled on this account. The people did not know the significance of the vote and why they were voting for the cock. No villager of Kullu except the Mukhia has seen the M. L. A. elected in 1957 from this area. Neither do they know his name. For the next general election, nobody has visited the village up till now. Neither the Congress nor the Jharkhand party seem to care for this area. Enlightened people in the village have realised that the person they elected in 1957 has been of no service to them. On the other hand they feel that the Government is doing a great deal for their uplift. Very few persons know the name of Gandhiji. More people know the name of Pandit Nehru. He is the person responsible for all that is being done by the Block. Jaipal Singh, the Adivasi leader is not known. His party is known by the sign of 'cock'. The local M.L.A. is not known. No one knows the name of any Bihar Minister. All of them know the B. D. O. and most of them recognise him.

There has been a general rise in the level of aspirations of the people in the village. This is due to increased outside contact and increased literacy, hearing of the radio, etc. Most of the villagers want to keep only one son on agriculture. For others they want jobs according to their qualifications. People are prepared to go out and work as peons in offices or as clerks, One of the respondents felt that a teacher or clerk's job was better than that of a lawyer, B. D. O. or Sub-Inspector of Police. Some people want to improve their agriculture, buy more land. According to them their future lies in the village.

VII

In my experience Kullu is one of the few villages in tribal Bihar where community life has not been disrupted due to the impact of modern changes. Whatever factions there were before have all disappeared and the village presents a picture of unity. This has been possible due to the progressive leadership of Simon Panna and the co-operation he is receiving from the authorities of the Mandar Block. This is also due to the fact

that the traditional leadership and traditional institutions like the Akhra Panchayat have not been destroyed but integrated in the fabric of new development and progress. Even those institution that have recently disappeared like the youth dormitory are sought to be revived. It will serve as a community centre in addition to performing the traditional functions of the youth dormitory among the Oraon.

STUDY OF CULTURE CHANGE IN TRIBAL BIHAR

The evidence in the hands of anthropologists and common experience proves beyond doubt that culture is dynamic. All cultures, primitive or modern, eastern or western, peasant or industrial, change. The only completely static cultures are the dead ones. The difference between one culture and another under the aspect of change is that some may change faster than others. In some cultures there may be more resistance while others may be more receptive to innovations. Some innovations and their consequent effects may change the face of the receiving culture beyond recognition. Some of such cultures may lose their moorings and may be swept off their feet by the pressure of factors of change. Some cultures may be selective in their response to innovations and may accept some and reject the others. In them changes may occur in certain aspects of culture only while the fundamentals remain in tact. All these phenomena of cultural dynamics give important leads to investigation and study both from the theoretical points of view and from the angle of applied anthropology. In this paper only the theoretical aspects will be dealt with.

The canvas of tribal culture is fast changing because of contact with alien peoples and alien ways of life. The process has been continuing for a very long time and as facilities for communication have increased, the isolation of the tribal villages has been broken. Hill paths and roads have taken alien people to inaccessible dense forests and hilly tracts of Chotanagpur. Constant living with non-tribal castes in the village, the growth of townships in the interior of the tribal regions, the increasing industrialization of the area due to its wealth of mineral resources and the growth of new industries consequent upon the enormous work done by the Damodar Valley Corporation, the work of various Christian missionaries as well as the growth of political consciousness have brought about a great deal of change in the life of the tribes in this area. Administrative authorities, forest officials, businessmen, contractors and money-lenders have given further fillip to culture change. The Munda and the Oraon have been studied by Sarat Chandra Roy and

monographs on them were published forty years ago, but since he described them enormous changes have come upon the tribes. Moreover the methods for the study of the subject has also advanced. The content of culture change, the leads it can give to many branches of social anthropology theory as well as to applied anthropology and tribal welfare work have multiplied.

A comprehensive study of culture change among the different tribes of the scheduled list is an urgent necessity. The purpose of the study should be to discover factors and the forces which lead to culture change and extent to which the lives of the tribes have been affected. An effort should be made to find quantitiatively the rate of change in the different facts of culture e.g., social structure including family life, intra family relations, kinship behaviour patterns, rules of marriage and of residence; economic structure including material culture, village and house pattern, introduction of money economy, exchange in *hats,* specialization, co-operation and trading; belief structure including the concept of the supernatural rituals for worship, agency for worship etc., and political structure including authority systems, the traditional panchayat and the Government sponsored panchayat. Change touches all aspects of life and includes fields like changes in the linguistic structure or vocabulary in folk songs and folk literature, in plastic arts and in the technique of dance and song. From an analysis of such changes as will have occurred in the above mentioned sectors, the rate as well as the direction of change will emerge. Efforts may also be made to find a corelation between the acceptance and rejection of innovations and child-rearing techniques in the community. Sometimes the changes may be so pervasive that a change in the basic personality structure may take place and after that there may be a further impetus to culture change.

Inspite of widespread changes which they have undergone most of the tribes in Bihar have still maintained their distinct identity from the donor group. They have not suffered from a loss of nerve and their population is steadily increasing, generally, agriculture is still their mainstay and their native religion still has the largest number of subscribers among them. What is it that gives such tenacity to these cultures? The forces of conservatism, resistance to change and stability is also sought to be studied in this context.

The trend of urbanization in these tribal areas is an important fact of study. Professor Redfield has enunciated his theory of folk-urban continuum. Rural culture and urban culture may be different but there is a channel that connects the two. It is through this channel that influences of the town reach the village. The existence of this channel can be discovered if we take up three villages one adjacent to a town, one far-away in the interior cut off from roads on all sides and a third in between the two. Thus we can measure the extent of urbanization.

The tribes in Bihar have come into contact with Hinduism for many centuries. Many of the religious ideas of philosophic Hinduism such as immortality of the soul, its transmigration, concept of heaven and hell and worship of Hindu deities are to be found in tribal society in some form or other. What McKim Marriott calls the great Tradition has been steadily influencing the Little Tradition. Stories from Hindu epics are prevalent among the tribes in their popular forms.

Study of culture change in tribal Bihar also reveals the fact that there has been no unilinear development of culture. Food gathering tribes are drawn into the vortex of complex societies characterised by money and markets without going through the intermediate stages.

In course of culture change the tribes of Bihar are losing the characteristics of primitive tribal societies. None of the tribes of Bihar is a self contained isolate. Even the nomadic Jaghi Birhors are vitally bound to the local markets where they dispose of their jungle produce. Though always moving they are never far from a market centre. The tribe or the village cannot be taken as a self contained isolate because of the system of marriage and the market. Villages are generally exogamous. In-law relations have to be found in other villages. A study of the range of marriage in a tribal village disclosed a vast network of marital relations. The relationship does not end with marriage. Unless the marriage breaks up, it continues for a generation or two. People exchange visits every now and then and ceremonial gifts have to be presented on certain occasions. Secondly, markets are held weekly at different places on different days. Every villager goes to a number of markets for

disposing of his surplus or to buy something or just visit to meet old friends and make new ones. It is the market, in one form or another, that pulls out from the compact social relations of self contained primitive communities some parts of men's doings and puts people into fields of economic activity that are increasingly independent of the rest of what goes on in the local life. Thus our tribal society is being transformed into a peasant society. From self contained isolates it is changing into a part-society. It has begun to play its role in regional and national life.

In tribal areas Christian missionaries have played a vital part in bringing about change. A church nearby is not only an agency for evangelization but a centre from which novel ideas go forth to the area around. Not only does a pastor change a person's faith but his entire life, ways of living, modes of thinking, level of aspirations are deeply affected. Even if a person is not converted his ideas undergo revolutionary changes which result in increased responsiveness to change in the social, economic, belief and political structures. The effect of the existence of the missionaries may be studied by taking a set of three villages in each tribe in respect of their distance from the missionary centre.

Most anthropological studies of culture change have lost sight of the process of communication involved in the wider process of change. Any research worth the name should include an investigation of this process in modern sociological terms. It would be of interest to enquire into both the media and content of communication. Investigation into the channels of communication leads directly to the problem of discovering the agents and carriers of change. An analysis of the acquisition of leadership roles over a period of three generations may be very fruitful. It will be interesting to find out if the leaders of change are different from the traditional leaders of the tribe in question. Generally the leaders of to-day may be rebels of yesterday and one who is regarded as a deviant to-day may be regarded as a leader to-morrow. Every year hundreds of tribals leave for the tea gardens of Assam or the Jute mills of Bengal to earn their living. They go both for short or long periods and are mostly drawn from such families who cannot make both their ends meet throughout the year. Naturally the traditional

leaders are not those who choose to go out. Others who leave abruptly are those who have transgressed the social code and who flee from the punishments their villagers might prescribe for them. Yet when they return from their travels, they are rich in money and also in experience. They have seen the world and can deal with non-tribal people freely and without complexes. So their offense is forgotton, poverty washed off and insolence condoned. The emergence of this new leadership is a challenge to the established authority of the old village elders. The conflict between the old and the new is the order of the day in most villages.

This is important because of the role of leaders in the acceptance or rejection of innovations. Some groups provide an ideal and a model for change. A keen student of culture change would see not only the manifestation of change, but go deep to discover the values and motivations leading towards it. The Community Development and National Extension Programmes undertaken by the Union Government is an attempt at directed culture change. Change is being introduced consciously and people are asked to respond in a certain way. In theory the programme has been devised after studying the felt needs of the people. Needs differ in different areas and the means of satisfying the needs also differ. But in practice the same needs are being sought to be satisfied and in precisely the same way in all areas. It is no wonder that the wave of popular enthusiasm is not even half of what was expected. The expectation of a 'pound of popular effort' for 'every ounce of Government aid' has remained a far cry. Students of culture change while assessing the work in the N.E.S. Blocks and Community Development areas can find out the reasons for this lack of popular enthusiasm. The importance of the human factor in technological change can be truly assessed by anthropologists.

Change is generally selective. People do not accept all innovations. They pick and choose both consciously and unconsciously. It is useful to find out peoples' initial responce to an item of change at the time when it is offered to them. If one follows the case-study method for this research, some interesting patterns may emerge out of his materials. Deeper study of the problems of selectivity in acceptance or rejection of

change may lead to the discovery of certain cultural screens through which all items of change are filtered and, in the process, modified. It may also lead to the discovery of a special cultural focus, marking out certain specific areas where tribal cultures are specially resistant to change. It would be highly important to be on the watch for any tendency towards cultural reinterpretation or cultural adaptation of alien items.

Another aspect of culture change is contra-acculturation. When a community lives long under the impact of change there is a second phase of psychologial reaction. He begins to rediscover his own culture. Old values are given new appraisal, old customs and institutions are endowed with new import and meaning. Instead of being ashamed of his way of life the tribal takes pride in his custom. One tribal leader recently met the Governor in the Raj Bhavan in his traditional loin cloth. The youth dormitory or the *'dhumkuria'* is being popularised a school of social training even though in most places it has lost its old character of housing the youths at night. Tribal songs and dances are being set to the tune of modern music. The dacadent *Parha* system is being rejuvenated as an instrument of political propaganda. The Government sponsored panchayat is not used in areas where the *Parha* is working. These Developments are so important that a student of culture change can only ignore at his peril.

INFLUENCE OF HINDUISM ON RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF THE ORAON

Introduction

The tribals in Chotanagpur have been living in close and active contact with non-tribal Hindu caste groups for a long time. The Oraons are comparatively one of the least conservative of the Chotanagpur tribals. They are most responsive to change. In all Oraon villages, a member of functional Hindu castes lives side by side with the dominant tribal community. These are the Ahir, Lohar, Ghasi, Kumhar etc. Besides them there are some caste Hindus such as Brahmans, Rajputs and Telis. These caste groups have been following their own religious beliefs and practices which the Oraon watched for long time as neutral observers. At the same time, the Oraon wanted to raise themselves in the esteem of the Hindus. This they could only do by an imitation of Hindu customs for imitation is the best form of appreciation. From the side of the Hindu castes there was no opposition to this move. Unlike the adoption of Christian rituals which could only be done after conversion, Hindu beliefs and rituals could be grafted on the indigenous faith without difficulty. So this process continued imperceptibly through the ages. The Oraon does not worry about the high philosophy or metaphysical content of the Hindu beliefs and practices that he adopts. Probably he does not come in contact with such groups as are associated with what Redfield calls the 'Great Tradition'; what they follow may be called the 'Little Tradition' or the local tradition ...

On the seventh day of Sawan (July—August) Sawani Puja is celebrated in villages. The *Pahan,* the Pujari and other villagers collect contribution for the purchase of a goat to be sacrified at the *Devi Mandap.* Each house gives some contribution. Out of the contribution a goat is bought and together with a group of men it is taken to the *Mandap.* The *Gorait* plays on his drum all the way. The *Pahan* brings from his house some incense, liquid rice-paste, jaggery, ghee, vermilion and *bel* leaves.

The *Mandap* is a small mud-built hut roofed with tiles. It has a door and window. In the room there is a mud- platform one foot high. Seven lumps of clay are placed there in a row. On each lump there are marks of vermilion and the rice paste. In 'front of each lump a *trisul* (trident) is planted. The Pujari washes the platform with *Dudh mitti* (White clay). Small dry mango twigs are placed on the platform and a fire is made. The *Pahan* puts a mixture of incense, ghee and jaggery on the fire and prays to the deity for rain. Some other persons put incense on the fire in the same way and utter some prayer. Then the goat is brought before the platform—its horns and forehead besmeared with vermilion. Small heaps of *arwa* rice are placed before the lumps on which the goat is allowed to feed. It is soon brought out of the room and sacrified. The head is later on placed in front of the deity. All assembled persons bow before the deity. The *Prasad* (sanctified offering) consisting of jaggery, *arwa* rice and ghee is distributed by the *Pahan* to all assembled there. An old person puts a *bel* leaf on the right ear of each person. Every body then goes to the *Pahan's* house where the goat's meat is distributed among all the families. The head and the legs are kept by the *Pahan* who gives a feast of meat, rice and pulse. All those who participate in the worship enjoy the feast.

The worship of *Devi Mai* appears to be widely prevalent in the Oraon area. In tribal worship fowls are sacrificed but in this case a goat is sacrificed. The offerings of rice, jaggery, ghee and vermilion speak of Hindu influence. The burning of incense before the deity also points to the same thing. The Oraons do not know what the seven lumps of clay put on the platform in the shrine represent. From the trident planted there, it would appear that the deity has some thing to do with Mahadeo. This deity is invoked in times of crises but in this case prayer is offered for bringing rain. After worship *Prasad* is not distributed in indigenous Oraon ritual but as this is a borrowed ceremony *Prasad* is distributed in the Sawani Puja. This worship has, however, been completely adopted by the Oraon as it is not left to individuals, but done collectively on behalf of the entire village by the religious headman called the *Pahan*. The very fact that contribution is raised from all the houses in the village, tribal or non-tribal, shows that the Puja has a universal appeal.

In Khapia, another Oraon village a worship called *Deothan*

is performed in the month of November. It is a general worship but is performed privately by a few householders. A portion of the courtyard in each of these houses is plastered with cow dung and decorated with marks of rice paste. Incense is burnt in a corner. A small child is seated there. His head and other parts of his body are marked with rice paste. He is said to represent the deity. He is then jointly lifed by three or four male members of the house who say loudly in chorus; "*Utho Utho Mahaprabhu, Haribol*". Then he is put back on the ground and offered sweet potatoes. On the place of worship a plough is also place. Rice paste is later sprinkled on all the articles of the house in which it takes place. The head of the family fasts throughout the day.

This festival seems to be a combination of first ritual and the worship of the High God of the Hindu. The words 'Mahaprabhu' and 'Hari bol' may speak of Vaishnava influence. The Oraons have no idea of who 'Mahaprabhu' is.

In Barahiya Rol a few Oraon youth of the village have learnt some *Mantras* from a professional shoe-maker, Jitu Chamar. They have kept the image of an unknown goddess in a house known as *Deva-Kuri*. The shrine consists of sixteen triangular flags. Each flag represents a separate deity whose name is only known to Jitu Chamar. The latter is recognized as *Guru*. His disciples give him paddy. Some of his disciples have been assigned different duties. Dhucha (14) worships the gods and goddesses. Potha (24) brings water for use at *Dev Kuri* and Champa (21) brings flowers for the shrine. The worship has to be performed morning and evening. In the morning one has to bathe before offering worship. Fire and incense are kept near the shrine. The worship is offered in the name of the followng deities :

Gaon Deoti, Path Chela, Duar Sami, Phul Chela, Guru-Guruain, Panch Pandav, Mansa Devi, Bhagwati Mai, Kali Mai, Hanuman, Kako Burhiya, Kataiya Deo, Burhia, Khakra, Kurhia etc.

At the end of each sentence during the worship the names of Devi, Brahm, Guru and Ram are chanted.

In this worship we find a mingling of tribal deities with distinctly Hindu deities and cult heroes. The chanting of the names of Devi, Brahm, Guru and Ram definitely speaks of Hindu influenee. A strange thing is that the Guru is a person who belongs to an untouchable Hindu caste. The devotees have to be ritually pure before going in of worship. No non-vegetarian offering is made to the goddess. Jitu Chamar is also credited with knowing a *mantra* which cures snake-bite.

These instances refer to cases in which the Oraons have not given up faith in their old deities and spirits but have added a few more from the Hindu pantheon. Some Oraons, however have given up their ancient religion and become *Bhagats*. *Bhagats* are of various description such as Danha Bhagats, Bachhi-dan Bhagats, Vishnu Bhagats and Tana Bhagats. Danha Bhagats worship Mahadeo and Devi Mai. They daily visit the *Devi Mandap* and recite some mantras. A devotee of Devi Mai can tell several things due to the blessings of the deity. He takes a common leaf and by gazing at it can tell what others are doing or saying about a person. About the efficacy of his powers some informants said :

"As you possess a radio and get news from everywhere, similarly if you are a real devotee of Devi Mai you will know everything."

Bachhidan Bhagats are those people who are ordained by Gurus who accept the she-calf as their fee. Gorakshini Bhagats are those Oraons who left cultivation and began to tend cattle. Such Bhagats are found in Ghagra and Gumla police stations. They worship the cow. More numerous than these sections are the Vishnu Bhagats. Their motto is 'Kaya Shakti Dhela Bhakti' or restriction of pleasures of the body for worship of the earth. The restrictions include taking of animal food and drinks as also indulging in singing and dancing. The earth is symbolised by a lump of clay. This lump of clay is anointed every day with white clay and incense is burnt round it. The elders of the house-hold every day, before and after taking meals, worship the lump of clay, sprinkle water on it, sing devotional songs and toll bells. Their god is Vishnu who is pictured as having four hands. Other deities are the manifestations of different powers. They worship Indra, Rainbow, thunder, lightning, air, sun, moon,

Mahadev, Parvati, Ganga, Jamuna, cow, ox, plough and some saints. Most of their gods are manifestations of forces of nature. In some shrines, besides a picture of Vishnu, the ox and the plough are also found. Vishnu Bhagats observe Phagu or Holi. On that day they worship Bhagwan in their own house and sing Bhajans.

By far the most numerous and famous of the Bhagat sects is the Tana Bhagat. It was founded by one Jatra Bhagat in about 1913—14. He hailed from village Chingri in the Bishunpur Police Station. From his early childhood he was of a contemplative turn of mind and wanted to become an *ojha* and *mati* (diviner). Every day he used to meditate facing the sun. In course of one such meditation he beheld a luminous presence. He received inspiration from the divinity to spread the message of truth for people's welfare and to bind them with one thread. The word 'tana' might have originated in the mind of Jatra Bhagat at this time in the sense of pulling together all the Oraon into his fold. Another meaning put on the term refers to the claim that the Tana Bhagats strive against all injustice and untruth. Tana Bhagats deny all belief in ghosts and spirits. They do not take liquor, meat or fish. They worship the cows as a deity. They do not domesticate fowls, pig or goats. They pay more attention to growing vegetables and making their own clothes. They do not offer any sacrifice to deities except only milk, ghee, fruits, flowers, arwa rice etc. At the time of worship they blow conch shells and toll bells. To purify the surroundings they burn incense. They believe in the omnipotence of God and the unity of the godhead. He is present in springs and streams also. They do not make any image of God and worship him as a formless entity. They observe Thursday as the day of rest.

Later on the Tana Bhagats took part in the non-co-operation movement of 1921. They started a no-rent compaign with the result that most of their lands were auctioned by the Government. Being staunch followers of the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi, they attended various Congress sessions outside Bihar.

The Bhagat movement clearly bears the mark of Hindu influence. All its tenets are derived from Hinduism, e.g. belief in one God, omnipresence of God, eschewing drinks, meat and

fish, blowing of conch shells, tolling of bells, burning of incense etc.

In the process of culture change, religious beliefs and practices show the greatest resistance. They tend to persist even against heavy odds in the midst of a fast changing social milieu. The cultural process in Chotanagpur is one more instance of the assimilative power of Hinduism. The history of India is replete with such instances.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN TRIBAL AREAS

Since 1952 India has embarked upon a huge programme of rural reconstruction through Community Development. Community Development is a co-operative partnership between the Government and the people whose sole objective is the all-round development of the people in a particular area. It is the only answer to the challenging backwardness of the rural masses. It is a programme of continuous development and as a pattern of administration it has come to stay. It enjoins a multipur pose approach to rural problems and people's participation is expected in all stages, from planning to execution. It is of utmost importance that people should understand the programme as also their role in making it a success.

By now more than two-thirds of the country has been covered by Community development blocks and it is expected that the programme will soon spread to all parts of India. It has included in its sweep large parts of tribal areas. The question now agitating the minds of anthropologists and administrators alike is whether the programme needs any modification before being applied to tribal areas. Numerous difficulties and problems have impeded its progress.

India has a tribal population of over nineteen millions, comprising 212 scheduled tribes. Their technology is simple, economy backward and they are faced with problems of socio-cultural adjustment. They are by and large, confined to hills and forests. Their comparative isolation has kept them apart from the main stream of Indian life and culture. Most of them are distinct cultural entities. They differ not only from the non-tribals in their region but also among themselves. Their economies are widely different and so also is the level of their cultural development. Hence their needs and the methods of satisfying those needs are different. A person who approaches them with a non-tribal frame of reference is, therefore, doomed to failure.

The development of these people is very much more than a mere implementation of the works programme. It involves

social processes to be set in motion, through a correct grasp of their culture, traditions and current problems of life. For, without a proper understanding of the people themselves, it is possible that the measures, howsoever well intentioned, may not bring out desired results. Workers have to intimately know the people among whom they have to work. Not only the schemes for their betterment have to be in consonance with their culture but they should also be initiated after full consideration of the susceptibilities of the people. Without these, the measures for their betterment may be self-defeating. It is necessary to introduce new technology with their consent and participation while preserving their native cultural forms, so that their latent creative energies are released for a fuller and more prosperous life.

The foremost difficulty in the tribal areas is a lack of understanding of their respective roles by the community development workers and the people at large. It will be illustrated by a case study from a Block near Ranchi.

The Block staff mostly comprised people from the non-tribal areas. They regarded their work as particularly difficult as they were unacquainted with the culture of the people among whom they worked. Most of them took the attitude of benevolent paternalism while others took their jobs lightly and thought that it was impossible to make the tribals change. With benevolence on one hand and apathy on the other, no attempt was made to involve the people with the programme. There were influential non-tribals in the area and their help and co-operation was easily available to the Block staff. The former were delighted at the opportunity of ingratiating themselves in the favour of officials and thus strengthening their hold on the tribal population. Their history as exploiters of the tribals could not be forgotten by the latter and therefore the Block officials became suspects in the eyes of the tribals. The Block people could also not be blamed as funds were meant not for tribals alone but for the development of all people in the area. When they received ready co-operation from the non-tribals there was no reason why they should not accept it. Moreover, co-operation from any quarter was welcome as they had to accomplish certain targets in a short time. If they depended upon tribals alone, this could not be done

as among them persuasion took such a lot of time and the response was so poor. Thus most of the non-tribals became executing agents for the different constructional activities on which money had to be spent. There was the rise of petty contractors who invariably sprang up from the ranks of the recently expropriated petty landlords. Thus community development led to the rehabilitation of the erstwhile exploiters of the tribals. For all this the tribals became very bitter against the Block.

When development work was started the tribals stood aloof as unconcerned spectators. Hitherto they had come across only such petty officials of the Government as the police constable, the postman, the revenue collector and the forest guard, with none of whom they had any reason to be friendly. With the coming of the Block, the Project officer accompanied by his extension staff toured the area extensively seeking avenues of improvement. For the tribal it was an unfamiliar sight to see Government officers busy in welfare activities. For a long time, many people did not appreciate this welfare role at all. People suspected that there was something behind this show of solicitude for the tribals. Whenever an unpopular scheme was pushed through, these conservative folk tried to smell foul and regarded it as an ulterior motive of development work.

The project officer and his staff were new to their jobs. It was difficult for them to comprehend their role also. Hitherto they had been used to receive habitual obedience from the people. Now they had to seek co-operation and participation of the people not by force but by free will. The process of bending down or stooping low, even to conquer, was difficult. Added to this was the difficulty of working in a totally unfamiliar area where the frame of reference to which they were used was inapplicable. Though tribal culture had to be kept as the background of all development, but for them the pattern of work dictated from above was sacrosanct. They did not like to take upon themselves the responsibility of altering the programme to suit the peculiar need of the area. As a matter of habit they obeyed the directives from above.

Community Development Programme entails directed culture change. When we take it to tribal areas our aim is the

ultimate integration of the tribes into the main stream of Indian life. That is a natural and desirable goal. But proceeding towards the goal, one should exercise care and caution and sometimes exercise restraint in certain areas against innovations of doubtful value. Development in various ways there has to be, such as communications, medical facilities, education and more efficient agriculture. These avenues of development should, however, be pursued within the frame work of the following five fundamental principles laid down by Prime Minister Nehru:

1. People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture.

2. Tribal rights in land and forest should be respected.

3. We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will, no doubt, be needed, specially in the beginning. But we should avoid introducing too many outsiders into tribal territory.

4. We should not over-administer those areas or overwhelm the tribals with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through and not in rivalry to their own social cultural institutions.

5. We should judge results, not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved.

5

Before the commencement of a development programme in a tribal area there should be an assessment of the felt needs of the people. Besides this first survey the Block personnel should be continuously engaged is surveying the results of programmes under implementation as the needs and problems of each of the Blocks are distinctive in character. After preliminary survey and in addition to the report of the Block personnel, regular scientific studies should be undertaken by trained social scientists. In this work the Tribal Research Institutes in various states could render help. In the special Multi-

purpose Blocks funds were allotted for research and study but they were not utilized in time and in most of these blocks the funds would lapse. In ordinary tribal blocks where there is no allotment for such study, a cultural survey may be made in the pre-extension stage by an S.E.O. trained in survey may be made in the pre-extension stage by an S.E.O. trained in survey methods. At present the S.E.O. is not provided in the pre-extension stage. It is essential that such a functionary be added to the pre-extension block staff. It is a good augury that in Bihar the Director of the Tribal Research Institute and the Director of the Social Education Organisers' Training Centre (Tribal) are actively associated with the working of all the special Multipurpose tribal blocks.

As large number of tribal people as possible should be employed in the tribal blocks. Frequent transfer of officers from one block to another is detremental to the proper implementation of the programmes. The number of V.L.W's in each Block is based upon the number of people in each circle. As tribal areas are sparsely populated and the distance between one settlement and another is long the criteria for dividing a Block into V.L.W. circles should not be population but the area served. This would inevitably lead to an increase in the number of V.L.W's in tribal Blocks and a better coverage of the area

Uptill now training for work in tribal area is given to the Social Education Organisers only. It has now been decided to give tribal orientation training to B.D.O.s and other extention officers at the Block level. A beginning is going to be made early with the officers from the special Multipurpose tribal Blocks. The Bihar Government is at present imparting tribal training to V.L.W.'s, Gram Sevaks and Karamcharis working in tribal areas, under the auspices of the Bihar Tribal Research Institute.

Conditions of work in tribal areas are difficult. The workers have to contend with bad communications, uncomfortable living conditions scarcity of food and difficulty in communicating with people. In most of the states no special allowance is given to workers. To attract good workers and also to keep them there, it is necessary to give them some monetory

incentive. Although the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation has been pressing this point, the State Governments have not yet made any provision in this regard. The result is that workers in tribal areas regard their placement in a tribal area as penal transfer and try their utmost to get themselves transferred from there.

The development programme of tribals has to be related to the ecological or environmental conditions. Although ecological conditions will affect occupation and mode of living, the need for understanding the tribals as having their own distinct culture different from that of non-tribals and the stage of their development is valid in all cases. The programme given in the schematic budget should only be treated as a type model for work to be undertaken in the Block. Every Block and in fact every village should develop a suitable programme according to the prevailing socio-economic needs of the tribals and their budgets to that extent may depart from the schematic pattern. It would be very much helpful if the B.D.O.'s in tribal Blocks be given the power of reallocation of the Block budget with the approval of the Collector of the District.

In those parts of the country where the tribal economy depends upon forestry, a share of the income from the forest produce should go to the tribals. The tribals derive not only sustenance from the forest but consider themselves spiritually linked with it. As the oldest inhabitants of the forest they think that they are the masters or lords of the forest and cannot be reconciled to the idea of a forest being 'protected' or becoming national wealth. They have to be slowly educated about this. There should be greater facilities for the tribal peolpe in the matter of fuel, timber and minor forest produce. Bihar Government has entrusted the task of forest management to the Gram Panchayats. The role of the latter is mainly that of custodian of forest wealth. This has resulted in stoppage of illicit cutting and theft. Forest Labourers' Co-operative Societies of the tribals should be set up and logging contracts as well as collection of minor forest produce should be entrusted to them.

On account of appalling poverty a large number of tri-

bals cannot improve their agriculture. They cannot furnish security for getting government loans. They might be given loans on personal security. It is seen that the tribals are not showing keen interest in agricultural development. Efforts should be made to correlate the increase in yield with the economics of production. If a certain improved practice is not adopted the workers should try to find out the reason. It may be that the new practice impinges on the sphere of tradition or custom or some other cultural or economic factor may be involved. Japanese method of paddy cultivation depends for its success on all the following factors:—(i) suitable lie of the ground (ii) rainfall at the right time or irrigation facilities (iii) readiness of the people to put in more labour than is usual (iv) capacity for purchasing chemical fertiliser. If any one of these conditions is not fulfilled the experiment is doomed to failure. Due care should be taken to guard against failure of an experiment. Failure in one aspect does not only mean failure in a particular programme but a lack of faith in the entire programme in the heart of the people.

As regards irrigation greater emphasis sholud be laid on providing facilities for minor irrigation through construction of wells and tanks. Suitable cottage industries should be developed in tribal areas. Care sholud be taken to see that there is no local or social prejudice against that industry and that its raw materials should be locally available and it should have a local market. The training given in the training-cum-production centres is good. The Instructors should see that trainees passing out of the centres remain in the trades for which they have been trained.

Tribals in certain areas are deeply in debt. The Central Advisory Board on Tribal Welfare recommended that all private debts incurred by the tribals which were more than three years old should be liquidated. But mere liquidation of debts would not bring permanent relief if arrangements are not made simultaneously for providing credit to the rural people either through co-operative societies or otherwise.

In formulating social programmes in tribal areas, the needs of the community and the expressed wish of the people should be taken into account. Such programmes should be

introduced as would evoke response from the people to the intiative and leaderships of the project authorities. One of the aims of the activities under this should be to create community workers and produce tribal leaders. The ultimate objective is to make the tribals themselves responsible for development work in their area. Social education programmes should be initiated through audio-visual aids and through any activity which evoke the enthusiasm and interest of the people such as Bhajans, dances or play-ground activities for youth. Community centre activities should depend upon local enthusiasm, interests and needs. They would include recreational welfare and cultural activities. Special care should be taken to see that the social development of the tribals does not lead to any friction between them and the non-tribals. It is sometimes seen that while schemes for economic betterment make a headway, there is a decline in community spirit among the tribals as a whole. This must be guarded against.

In some areas tribals have certain traditional institutions through which development work may be done. It would be wise not to start new institutions to rival the old ones. Even if the old institutions need some sort of modification or some more functions have to be grafted on them, this process should be encouraged. It will have the twofold effect of rejuvenating old languishing institutions as well as of creating a fund of goodwill and confidence in the mind of the tribals and they would come to regard the development programme as their own.

In many tribal areas there are traditional panchayats, some active and others dormant. If in such places statutory panchayats are established, it would mean a stiffling of tribal councils which may be doing fine work and would defeat the object of developing the programme according to the genius of the tribals. If at any place the tribal councils are not working satisfactorily they should be activised rather than supplanted. In certain parts of the Ranchi district the traditional village panchayat is working quite satisfactorily. The Parha panchayat which comprises a number of villages is also working well in certain parts. The residents in these areas do not send their cases to the statutory panchayats or law courts. Another harm in starting statutory panchayats in such areas is the introduction of elections which leads

to factions and party politics. It has been seen that even in those areas where the tribals are in a majority the Mukhias and the Sarpanches of the statutory panchayats are the influential non-tribals. The tribals have come to regard the statutory panchayat as a foreign element and therefore do not evince any interest or put any confidence in them.

In some parts of tribal Bihar and certain other Parts of India we have youth dormitories which are known by different names. Besides serving as a sleeping house for the youths of the village these dormitories provide training in music, dance, folk culture etc. These are, in fact, a seminaries of tribal youth and are the only places for the formal training of the tribals. The youths acting as a body perform a number of ritual and economic functions on behalf of the entire village community. In Bastar district of the Madhya Pradesh, these dormitories have been recognised as youth clubs. They have each been given some land in which they are encouraged to use improved methods of agriculture. In Bihar also we could do the same with benifiit. We could also recognise the dormitory as a sort of community centre or social education centre. Thus the corporate life in the youth dormitory could be restored and it could be saved from decay or degeneration.

Similar is the case with the traditional grain gola of the Oraon. In the villages west of Ranchi upto Lohardaga, there are as many as 302 grain golas maintained by the villagers themselves. The initial stock was created by asking for some subscriptions in kind from each house. This is known as the 'Gairahi' grain gola. Instead of starting fresh grain golas these non-official grain golas could have been given government backing. Thus all the abuses which have crept in the working of the grain gola now could have been done away with.

The fixation of targets for different items in the programme should be realistic. If they are the same as in Blocks in plains or non-tribal areas, they would be difficult to achieve. The general cultural level of people in the non-tribal areas is higher, so that people can grasp the significance of an innovation better and respond to it quicker. In tribal areas, this social preparation is lacking. Ideas are communicated

slowly and people accept an idea only after great effort on the part of extension worker. Bad communications add to his headache. Necessarily nuder these circumstances, the output of work would not be great. Unless the targets are revised extension work will be slipshod and unsatisfactory. A worker who does not complete his target is regarded as inefficient and hence his work may be bad and its impact is not lasting. Sometimes tribals may accept an idea before an extension worker and give it up as soon as he turns his back. This is because the tribal) is not convinced but accepts the programme to please or oblige a government officer. The target should therefore be spread over a longer period of time so that they may keep pace with the rise in the consciousness of the people.

It has been found that sometimes the percentage of people's contribution fixed for tribal areas is higher than they can afford. While some contribution, however little, should be insisted upon, as it shows the interest of the beneficiary in the programme, the B.D.O. must be given powers to alter the percentage in case of really needy and poor tribals.

When framing programmes for tribal areas we should keep in mind certain priorities. At present most of the attention is being paid to economic development. Experience however, tells us that sometimes tribal people are not able to appreciate the advantage of the schemes meant for their economic gain due to a lack of awareness of their own problems. It is of utmost importance that social education programmes should be pushed on with much greater vigour than at present. In all cases social development must precede economic development. Unless this is so, much of our efforts in the field of economic betterment will be wasted. Priority must also be given to communications and public health.

More special multipurpose tribal Blocks should be opened in the country so that more funds are available for the development of tribal areas. It would be better if all the welfare schemes in a Block area are operated through the Block administration as it will do away with duplication of effort. In appointing the staff for tribal Blocks we have to see that the non-tribals who are selected are honest, sincere, incorrup-

tible and friendly. It is through them that tribals will come to form an idea of non-tribal character. If they are lacking in these qualities, they would lose the confidence of people they have gone to serve and also undermine the progress of development work.

If the problems set forth above and the suggestions made are kept in view in Community development work in tribal areas there is no reason why people's co-operation and participation would not be available in ample measure.

IMPACT OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

Change is as old as man. Most of the changes in cultures, have been due to technological innovations in the man-made environment and to the emergence of new values. The Neolithic Revolution was marked by domestication of animals, beginnings of agriculture and the use of new tools. With the Urban Revolution came the use of metals, improved agriculture, irrigation, wheeled transport, commerce and industry and the beginnings of the State. The Industrial Revolution was the third one which led to enormous changes in the life of the people all over the world.

These successive changes have been accepted as inevitable. Cultures are the most flexible of adaptable mechanisms. On the individual plane also, change is an inherent part of human organism. It is involved in growing, learning maturing, all necessary for the adaptation of man to his environment. Changes occur through the introduction of new tools, improved technology and new ideas. These result in the modifications in the social system and in the personalities of people living in it who in turn modify the social system. The moral order generally changes more slowly than the technical order in which men are bound by things rather than by sentiment.

Industrialization involves a drastic change in the methods of production. It leads to qualitative and quantitative transformation of the processes of manufacture. Man is gradually replaced by machine. Instead of individual craftsmen producing goods with interest and skill, the machines turn out goods in a mass. Hereditary skills and personalized relations between the employer and the employee are no longer required. Domestic or cottage production is replaced by factory production. Wherever industrialization began in any country of the world, it brought in its train a new society, new values and new culture. A Unesco study on the effects of industrialisation—on employees says :

"The signs of very great individual unhappiness are legion. They range from complete breakdown—suicide or permanent

mental illness through sickness with a large psychosomatic component—to the obsessive thinking and morbid states of dejection which have no statistical tables to themselves. Divorce. delinquency and myriad examples of anti-social behaviour, not classified as crime are the repercussions in intimate social relations. More generally the drift is toward autocratic leadership and mass destruction."

In spite of its heavy social cost most of the countries of the world are industrialized and others are set on the road to industrialization. In India, great stress has been laid on rapid industrialization in the successive Five Year Plans. Priority is being given to basic industries and production of capital goods. Most of the areas in which raw materials are situated lie in the tribal belt of middle India. These areas are being opened up for the exploitation of coal, iron, copper, mica, manganese, bauxite and other minerals. Gigantic steel plants, heavy engineering industries and numerous mining operations are now working in these areas. Some of the remotest corners in the tribal areas like Jarandalli iron quarry, Korba collieries, Bailadilla iron ore deposits are now being worked. They all lie in the Gond country. The steel town of Jamshedpur lies in the heart of the Ho country. The iron ore mines at Gua and Noamundi and the copper mines at Musabani lie in the same area. The coal miners of Hazaribagh and Dhanbad district are mostly Santal. Thus industrialization has come to the tribal in a big way and it is rapidly transforming not only the persons directly employed in the industries but also their dependents and other people.

The first effect of industrialization on the tribal is his displacement from his hearth and home. The site of the factory and the township which is built round the plant require a huge area. As all the areas are populated and consist of Adibasi villages, the people of these villages are asked to quit. Compensation is paid to them for the loss of their lands and houses. Sometimes alternative sites are given to them for resettlement but in most cases the company thinks that its responsibility ends with the payment of compensation. To the tribal who does not generally see beyond his immediate future, industrialization comes as an unmitigated curse. A firmly settled villager becomes a refugee losing his kith and kin, land

and the gods of the village which he worshipped. This has led to mass upheavals and a great deal of discontent. The compensation given in absence of any guidance is mostly squandered away. It is not used for productive purposes. After some time the once happy villager is reduced to the status of a pauper. Such a tribal considers himself fortunate to get the job of an unskilled worker when the factory employs him.

The impact of industrialization is specially important in tribal areas because of the fact that many of its values are in contrast to the traditional tribal ethos. In many areas and for many tribals, this impact has led to a process of detribalization. The tribals were living in comparative isolation, in a more or less closed society. Their movement was strictly limited spatially. Their economic, social and political relationships were concentrated in a particular area instead of being diffused. This concept of space has been drastically broadened. The traditional identity passed on an image of insulated spaciousness has come into conflict with a new image of explosive global closeness. The improvement in the means of communication has led to wide spatial mobility. For the tribal, time was not of much value. He spent many hours in the jungle chasing a game which he would not have succeeded in catching or devoted many hours to going to and coming back from the weekly market where he did not make any transaction. With industrialization, the realization of the value of time has dawned upon him. He has to be punctual in his work, otherwise he may lose his job.

The introduction of money economy has led to radical changes in the economic system. It has transformed the traditional communal goals of the extended kinship groups to those of personal achievement and individual careers. This has resulted in changing the structure of the family and the position of men and women in it. The traditional concept of respect of the young for their elders, of women for men, of the commoner for the headman accompanied by elaborate ritual and etiquette has also no place in an industrial society. The newly achieved status in industry affects the form and nature of leadership. A man who enters as a mere labourer by successive rises becomes a middle-class man. Such social mobility

is unknown in traditional tribal society. It also leads to the creation of a self-conscious status group and ultimately to the growth of a class system which is generally unknown among tribal groups in middle India and which militates against the tribal norm of egalitarian society. Modern educational facilities which accompany growth of industrialization introduce a fundamental shift in emphasis in the theories of causation. This new scientific and rational orientation has reduced the incidence of witch-craft accusations. Industrialization leads to organisation and to growth of consciousness about one's rights and privileges. The industrialized tribals have more opportunities of voicing their grievances and demanding a right to mould their own destiny. The most fundamental change is the loss of homogeneity which is a tribal characteristic. Tribal labourers have to live in the midst of other labourers and therefore their individual characteristics tend to be blussed. Last but not the least important is the growth of criminality. The anonymity in a labour settlement gives ample opportunity to the anti-social propensities of individual tribals. The social control exercised by the elders and traditional village headmen is absent in the town.

Even though the subject is so important from the point of view of theoretical anthropology as well as from that of applied anthropology, not much work has been done in India. The Bihar Tribal Research Institute has made some preliminary studies in the steel town of Jamshedpur and in the coal, copper and iron mining areas in this regard. Similarly the Cultural Research Institute has brought out a booklet on the 'Impact of Industrialisation on the Tribes of West Bengal'. This problem deserves deep penetrating analysis. It involves the question of the rehabilitation of the displaced persons, the problem of psycho-social adjustment to the new situation and finally the absorption of the tribals in the new set up. We have to see that mineral resources are exploited to the full and factory production increase but the rising tide of economic prosperity should also benefit the tribals to the greatest extent possible.

In the village, two sectors of his relationships are most vital to the tribal and both of these are snapped in the industrial setting. These are man's relationship with nature and

his relationship to his kindred. The place of the former is taken up by the machine and of the latter by co-workers belonging to communities other than his own. Before this relationship stabilizes into a norm, the tribal continues to experiment with a number of alternatives. In the sphere of marriage, he finds himself more free than ever and sometimes breaks the taboos of clan exogamy and tribal endogamy. The fear of infringing the taboo hangs only lightly over him. Absence of parental support for marriage makes him discount their consent. The political power wielded by the traditional headman does not touch him now and he does not care for him. In the village, stresses and strains were few and the only recognised outlet for anxiety was witchcraft accusation. In the town anxieties mount and they are channelized through alcoholism, beer drinking, petty quarreling, gossiping etc. In the industrial area, there is a tendency of expansion of group identity beyond the tribe. Inter-tribal marriages, association in political organisations and trade unions cut across tribal lines. Radio, movies and newspapers bring news and views of the world which was beyond the comprehension of the tribal in preindustrial society. His universe expands. So does his world view and his level of aspirations.

In the past a tribal looked to his kin for help in times of trouble, unemployment, illness or some other crises. The lineage ties represented security. Now the conjugal family is more important than the lineage. There is greater emotional closeness between the couple. For security, people now look to pension, provident fund etc. Childhood socialization in a labouring class family strengthens these attitudes.

Leisure-time activities are an index of social change. Through them we can study tensions, frustrations and values Most of the activities are not only pleasurable but also goal-oriented. In tribal villages, they drank beer, flirted, had sexual affairs, performed dances, told folk tales and riddles, visited neighbours and talked and gossiped about the doing of kindred. In such activities, men, women and children had their roles. These activities have been replaced by others such as going to movies, theatres, football matches etc.

Large number of tribes work in the various factories in Jamshedpur but the largest concentration is in the Tata Iron

and Steel Company which has on its rolls more than six thousand workers. Their numbers are few compared to the huge number of non-tribal workers who are more than 50,000 strong. Most of the tribal workers are unskilled 75% of these workers earn less than Rs. 100/- per month. Only 1% receive more than Rs. 200/- per month as wages. The tribals do not belong to one community but are drawn from the Ho, Santal, Munda Bhumij and Oraon folds. The number of tribal Christians is very few. Female labourers form 20% of the tribal labouring population. More than 90% of the tribal labours has come from outside. The pressure on land is forcing them to seek employment elsewhere. There are few of them who have been labourers for two generations. More than 90% of the tribal workers are in constant touch with their homes through visits. Some of them receive foodgrains from home while some others regularly send money to support their relations in the village. More than 75% of them are in debt.

Food habits are changing fast. In the village people were satisfied with rice and vegetable or pulses or some non-vegetarian food. Now wheat flour is being consumed together with larger quantities of vegetables, meat, fish, eggs and milk. Tea drinking has become a regular habit. Taking snaks in cheap restaurants is also popular. Tobacco, ganja and *bhang* are also consumed in large quantities. Instead of the native rice-beer, the distilled liquor which is harmful and more intoxicating has become popular.

The native tribal dress has been given up. Men wear shirts and shorts and sometimes trousers. Unskilled labourers wear a short dhoti and bunyan. Women wear saris and blouses. Brassiers and petticoats are in vogue. There is increasing use of cosmetics, scents, powder, cream etc. Footwear which is not common in villages is important for the tribal worker in industry.

There is free mixing between the tribals and non-tribals. A number of marriages have been reported between tribal girls and non-tribal boys. In Noamundi iron mine area many non-tribals were reported to be keeping tribal women. There are as a consequence, a number of illegitimate children. When the non-tribal father leaves, the mother and children are left destitute. The mother more often than not falls from virtue and the children become delinquents.

Linguistic acculturation is taking place at a fast rate. All the workers are able to speak Hindi and some who have been in town for two generations are forgetting their native language. There is a growing awareness of the need for education as it opens up fresh avenues for employment. Tribals are anxious to put their children to school. Large numbers of tribal girls are also attending co-educational schools or schools meant only for them.

The importance of religion in tribal life has declined markedly. The totems and the taboos do not evoke the same kind of emotional response as in the past. The duration and glamour of traditional religious ceremonies and the dances connected with it have been shortened due to economic pressure and lack of enough spare time. The important tribal festivals like Sarhul and Karma are still being celebrated. Hindu festivals like Holi and Dasehra evoke a large degree of enthusiasm among the tribals.

Various diseases which were unknown in the villages like digestive troubles, skin diseases, veneral diseases and tuberculosis claim a large number of victims among the tribals. The congestion and insanitary conditions prevailing in Jamshedpur slums and the workers' colonies known as Hutting in Gua and Noamundi iron mine areas are responsible for the easy spread of these ailments. In Noamundi, no worker would disclose whether he was suffering from veneral disease for fear of being discharged by the authorities.

The total situation in which the tribal worker in industry has been placed has been described by George Kennan.

"Whenever the authority of the past is too suddenly or too drastically undermined ; wherever the past ceases to be great and reliable reference book of human problems ; wherever above all the experience of the father becomes irrelevant to the tribals and searchings of the son—there the foundations of man's inner health and stability begin to crumble"

The old order is crumbling up. Tribal values and what ever tribalism stands for are being lost. The tribal is becoming part of the mass society. He is advancing towards integration with the rest of the people. The shape of this synthesis or

reintegration is still to be forged. The task of the social scientist, planners and administrators is to see that the tribal is not entirely swept off by the flood tide of industrialization but retains his individuality and continues to enrich Indian culture by his valuable contributions.

LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE CHANGE IN KULLU

This study focusses attention on a situation wherein alien concepts of leadership have been and are being introduced by a superordinate culture to a subordinate one. Under conditions of culture contact in Kullu, the study of leadership provides an excellent means for the examination of certain features of change, utilizing data from a limited, yet a highly significant area of human behaviour. The nature, varieties and characteristics of leadership and the attendant stresses and strains observable under such conditions deserve attention.

In this study the basic concentration is on changes from traditional modes and patterns of leadership and on culture change. Within this area of emphasis are considered the effect of cultural change on traditional leadership behaviour and statuses changing leadership roles and sanctions, leadership characteristics, the nature of emergent leadership, the conflicts and stresses engendered by the conditions of culture change. New leaders are rising to focal positions of power as different modes of political organization and activity emerge through the development of Panchayati Raj. New leadership roles are introduced as new concepts of education, public health and economic development take hold.

In Kullu with a general receptivity to change from alien cultures, the situation is specially favourable for the investigation of culture change in general. Of all areas of Oraon culture, which might be chosen to demonstrate the processes and effects of culture change, that of leadership and leadership behaviour offers perhaps the richest rewards. It was for the reason that I chose to investigate the changing patterns of leaderships, the mechanism and means of exercising authority and the agents and agencies of power in Kullu and to contrast the traditional ones with the emergent.

The team leadership designates role behaviour of a dominant influencing and directing character. It is provided

by an individual who stands in a superordinate status position to one or more individuals, who by nature of their interaction comprise a social group whose collective behaviour is more or less goal-oriented. A leader is taken to be an individual who stands in a subordinate relationship to one or more other individuals. By virtue of the authority exercised by him willingly or maintained by him through coercion, he exercises powers of influence, decisions, origination or facilitation of action and policy formulation with respect to the other individuals in the relationship. The behaviour of a leader exhibits directing, organizing and controlling.

To-day in Kullu individuals who provide leadership are more broadly recruited than was true under the traditional system. Leaders are not derived solely from upper strata of the social structure as was formerly true. The present system allows access to positions of respect and power to more categories of individuals than earlier. The basic change is from a closed system in which leadership positions were by and large ascribed, to a relatively open one in which leadership positions may also be achieved. Leadership roles are much more diffuse and varied to-day than formerly. In proportion to total population many more persons serve as leaders. Power is broadly distributed and its exercise is diffused along with new leadership roles.

Social mobility is possible, since to-day one may attain social prominence without having been born to rank. The old criteria for elevated social status still operate, but new criteria have also come into being. Performance based on special skills and recognized competence enables individuals from any stratum of society to achieve leadership status.

The Village and its People

The village chosen for this study is Kullu. It is an Oraon village lying in the south-western corner of the area under the jurisdiction of the Mandar Police Station. Formerly included in the Mandar Community Development Block, it has recently been placed under the newly established Sons Tribal Development Block. It is eight miles from the nearest railway station, Nagjua. There is no road connecting Kullu with Nagjua. One has to walk through agricultural fields or

on narrow slippery embankments between two fields in the rainy season. A hillock has to be scaled and two streams have to be forded on the way. Sons, an important market place on the Ranchi-Lohardaga road, is nearly ten miles north of the village. Proposals to connect Kullu with Sons by road have failed due to heavy outlay on account of bridges to be constructed over the rivers and streams that cut up the region. During the rains the village is almost inaccessibe and it is extremely difficult to reach any supplies there.

Kullu is still comparatively isolated and removed from the main lines of communication. It is a traditional village and change is not directly visible to any casual observer. Community feeling in the village is still high, even though the fountain head of this unity is not the traditional headman. It is the story of the impact of new ideas and forms on the old order of things. It is the forging of a new synthesis between the old and the new without any emotional disturbance or turmoil in the inter-group behavioural pattern. It is the saga of the emergence of a new leadership which is not average to development activities but welcomes it with open heart.

The total population of the village is 568 out of whom 101 are literate. There are 105 families whose distribution is as follows:—

Oraon (unconverted)	—50
Christian Oraon	— 8
Munda	—16
Lohra	— 1
Panr	— 4
Mahli	— 2
Dusadh	— 9
Other castes	—13
Muslim	— 2
Total	105

The total area of the village is 939.60 acres of which 578.86 acres are under the plough, the rest being homestead, orchards,

fallow land, paths and a hillock. In most houses some land is included in the *bari* or kitchen garden in which vegetables are grown. The main crops are paddy, *urad, marua,* wheat, gram and *rahar.* There are only two landless families in the village. The average holding is about 5.50 acres.

The dominant social group in Kullu is the tribal. But the tribals are not of one kind. While the 'majority is composed of the Oraon, the Munda families number 16. The fact that the Pahan (religious headman) is a Munda shows that the Mundas were the former masters of the village. Later incursions of the Oraon made them withdraw to other areas. But the fact that there are sixteen families still left shows that they were not all expelled. By the time the Oraon reached this interior part, the strength of their hordes might already have been on the wane. The Pahan was allowed to continue as the religious head, as before, due to his acquaintance with local deities and spirits. His influence and power must have been confined to the religious sphere. In the political shpere, the Mahto belonging to the dominant community, must have been supreme. With the advent of Christianity the group solidarity of the Oraon suffered a setback. As many as eight families now belong to the Christian fold. The non-Christian Oraon have been reduced to a minority in the population of Kullu.

Other significant groups in the population are comprised by Mahli, Lohra, Dusadh and Ahir. Among the higher Hindu castes mention may be made of Brahman, Kayastha and Bania. The first is an ex-zemindar, the second, a person of mixed descent, is a landless labourer and the third has a small shop.

The chief means of livelihood of people in this village is agriculture. The two families which are landless also work on the lands of others. Very few of the families are self-sufficient in respect of food. Soon after the winter harvest, a large number of young men and women go to the brick-kilns round about Calcutta and the tea gardens of Assam for earning their livelihood. They come back late in April or early in May to be in time for the Sarhul festival. Before the setting in of the monsoon they have to prepare the fields for the

next sowing. All the people that go out are not compelled by financial stress. Some go to amass cash to pay off some old debts and to see the world outside. The four or five month work-cum-holiday gives them some relief from the drab routine of village life. But for most others, this annual exodus gives them the necessary cash for paying land revenue, purchasing clothes etc. Even if they do not bring back sufficient money, their mental horizon is enlarged and their level of aspirations goes up.

The functional communities in the village like the Panr the Mahli and the Lohra engage in their traditional occupation like cloth weaving, basket making and smithy in addition to agriculture. One Muslim family specializes in making tiles. Thus the village is self-sufficient in cloth, baskets, iron implements, tiles, mats, winnowing fans, leaf raincoats, cots and simple furniture.

Context of Traditional Leadership

The traditional leadership in an Oraon village is provided by the Pahan, Mahto, Pujar etc. The Pahan is responsible for making or marring the fortunes of a village. Just as the Mahto maintains proper relationship between the villagers and world outside, the Pahan looks after the relationship between the village and the gods and spirits. The Pahan serves for a three-year period. His selection is made by a process of divinition locally known as *pairenga.* Ordinarily he belongs to the Pahan lineage of the dominant clan, but failing a suitable candidate, he may be selected from the families descended from the original settlers of a different lineage. The Pahan holds service lands which are rent-free and inalienable. The Pahan propitiates village deities on behalf of the entire village regularly on the occasion of important festivals and also in times of emergency when some epidemic breaks out or when gods make their wrath felt in other ways. The Pahan is also an influential member of the traditional village panchayat. At-present Hosen Pahan is the religious leader of the village.

The secular leader in an Oraon village is the Mahto. He is the representative of the village and was responsible in the

days of landlords to the latter for collection of revenue. In some Oraon villages, there were two-persons holding this post, one being elected by the people from the Mahto lineage of the original settlers of the village and the other a deputy of the landlord. Thus in Oraon villages, the Mahto could never wield as much importance as his counterpart, the Munda, wielded in Munda villages . In Kullu there was no traditional Mahto. This is borne out by the fact that there is no Mahtoi land. The landlord's agent lost all status and influence with the abolition of landlordism about twelve years ago. In actual fact he never counted for much in village affairs. At the time of the present study he could not even be traced.

The Pahan's assistant is known as the Pujar or Panbhara. He brings water, flowers etc. for the communal worship. He also collects fowl from the villagers at the time of the Sarhul and Karma festivals. While the Pahan makes all sacrifices, the Pujar cuts the sacrificial object into small pieces and distributes them to the devotees. In the absence of the Pahan, the Pujar performs all his functions There is a Pujar in this village but he is content enough to follow the lead of the Pahan. He is a simple cultivator, having no ambitions. He is not a contender for village leadership.

In such a social situation leadership could have been provided by the local landlord. The ex-landlord, Yogendra Purani, is a Brahman. A petty landlord, he did wield influence in the days of zemindary, but now-a-days he is dormant and is content to play second fiddle to others.

The other place where traditional leadership among the Oraon is nurtured is the youths' dormitory or the Dhumkuria. In olden days, this was the only institution for the formal training of youth. There were some posts in the Dhumkuria like that of the Dhangar Mahto and Kotwar which provided training ground for future leaders. These young apprentice officials were given training in organization, administration and responsibility under the direction and supervision of the village elders. The Dhumkuria was an active force till twelve years ago. Its membership included not only Oraon, but Munda, Gorait, Dusadh and Muslim boys. In recent years, due to the apathy and ridicule of the non-tribals and the growth of school education inside and near about the village,

the institution of the Dhumkuria has decayed. The building has fallen into disuse and disrepair. In this way the school for training of leaders disappeared leaving the field open for any person who had the ability to achieve it.

In Kullu before the introduction of statutory panchayats, power and influence were shared by the Pahan, the traditional Panchayt and the village Chowkidar, Deman Ram. The traditional panchayat did not have any fixed membership. All adult males in the village could attend its meetings. All disputes and such matters where a decision was to be taken by the entire village were brought up before this body. It met in the dancing ground of the village under the presidentship of the Pahan. The Pahan decided cases with the help and advice of the Pujar and other elders of the village. The punishment was generally a fine, which was used for feasting and drinking. An analysis of eighteen cases decided by this panchayat during recent years reveals the following kinds of cases: —

(a) Cases arising out of moral and sexual offences	—13
(b) Clash between persons of the same village	— 3
(c) Clash between persons belonging to 2 villages	— 1
(d) Poisoning	— 1
Total	18

In all these cases either compromise was effected between the contending parties or fines were levied upon the culprits. In all cases of sexual offence heavy fines were imposed and only then the forbidden sexual union was given the stamp of social approval. There were two cases of union between an Oraon and a Munda and one marriage between an Oraon and Ahir girl.

The other person who wielded influence and power in the village was Deman Ram, the Chowkidar. Dusadh by caste, he is the lowest representative of the police. It is his duty to report all happenings in or about the village to the police station at Mandar when he goes there for his weekly attendance. He tried to entangle many persons in the village in fictitious cases and was instrumental in bringing policemen

to the village for fleecing people. He was an engine of oppression and prided in the reflected glory of the police whom he represented People were terribly afraid of the police, and in olden days the sight of the red turban made people flee into the hills and forests near by. There were many cases in which the police threatened to arrest people. It was only on heavy payment of bribe that they were saved. Certain people were financially ruined by the machinations of the police. It was possible for Deman Ram to get anything done by threatening to invite the police.

Emergence of New Leadership

In 1952 two very important things happened. The operation of the Bihar Gram Panchayat Act was extended to Kullu. By this self-government reached the village level. Kullu was one of the eight villages covered by the Byasi Panchayat. The idea of the statutory panchayat was entirely new to the villagers. Early in the year some of them had cast their votes in the first general election. They did not understand the implications and importance of their votes. What happened in the Parliament in Delhi or the Legislative Assembly at Patna the Parliament in Delhi or the Legislative Assembly at Patna did not seem to touch them. The panchayat elections, however, stirred them. They came to realize that they could elect the Mukhia and the *panches* according to their own sweet will. The idea of unrestricted election was novel to them. Until then they had their traditional leaders in whose choice they had little say. In most cases, leadership was ascribed rather than achieved. Whatever little choice was exercised in the election of the Pahan was more an interpretation of the divine will than anything else.

The same year saw the beginning of the Community Development programme in the country. Kullu was included in one of the projects of the first series called the Ormanjhi-Ranchi-Mandar Project. An Assistant Project Officer with a number of assistants was posted in Mandar. But Kullu was situated in such an obscure corner that the project authorities could not reach it. The first contact with the Community Development staff took place when the then Block Development Officer wanted some cutcha roads to be constructed in that area for the second general elections.

Till 1957, therefore, the main exogenous factor for culture change was the panchayat. Being local in nature, its impact was profound. It shook people's life-ways and thought-ways. Those who were masters till the other day were approaching the poorest villager for his vote. There was scope now for talent to show itself. Persons with ability in organization, persuasive power, oratorial skill, some education and knowledge of men and affairs in the world outside could became leaders. Time was ripe for the emergence of new leadership.

As a result of the setting up of the statutory panchayat at Byasi, two persons from Kullu entered the panchayat executive. They were Yogendra Purani, the ex-Brahman landlord and Simon Panna, a converted Oraon with some school education. Two more persons were elected from the village for the panchayat judiciary. They were Santosh Panna and Mahesh Ram, a Harijan.

Simon Panna belongs to a respected and established family of the village. His grandfather Bhola had embraced Christianity in 1895. All the Christian families in this village are descended from him and thus form a closely knit lineage. Simon was born in November 1919. When he was eight or nine years old his grandfather became involved in a case with the landlord of the village. This long drawn case sapped the financial strength of the family. From being a substantial and well-to-do family, it was reduced to great hardships. Simon was a member of the Dhumkuria even though he was a Christian and had been attending the lower primary school in a neighbouring village. Though they had fallen on evil days, his family did not neglect his education. He was sent to a middle school fifteen miles from the village, but could not complete his education due to the death of his father.

Of the two persons elected to the panchayat judiciary, one was a second cousin of Simon Panna and the other was a member of the Scheduled Caste from Kullu. In the second panchayat elections held in 1955, Yogendra Purani and Simon Panna got in again in the executive. In the judicial wing Mangra Oraon and Sheikh Sabar Ali, a Muslim, were elected. At the end of the year 1956, the Mukhia Ibrahim Minz had to give up his post. In this vacancy Simon Panna was appointed.

It is clear that by that time he had strengthened his position and made it more secure. His rising popularity and influence were due to his interest in public work and his desire to help others in their trouble. When in difficulty, persons went to him for solution, and if occasion arose, he did not hesitate to go even to Ranchi to plead their case with government officers. Equipped with some education and gifted with a sweet tongue and obliging nature, he could easily win the confidence of the people.

Early in 1957 he came into contact with Block authorities, which further buttressed his position. As polling booths had to be established in the interior, some jeepable roads had to be constructed. The Mukhia of the neighbouring panchayat of Silagain took an advance for the construction of a cutcha road from Hurhuri to Kullu. The progress of the work was so slow that the B. D. O. who came to inspect the work a fortnight before the polling date, became unnerved. He at once went to Kullu to contact the Mukhia, Simon Panna. The latter assured him that he would complete the work in a week's time, if the work were assigned to him. The B. D. O. asked him to begin the work at once and save his prestige. The work was completed in record time and the election party was able to go to Kullu on its vehicle. This achievement established the reputation of the new Mukhia for influence and organization and thereafter all the workers of the Block began to get their work done through him. His recognition by government officials strengthened his own position at home.

Whenever the Block authorities introduce new measures, the Mukhia is the first person to accept them. He was the first man to use chemical fertilizers. After some time others followed suit. He was the first to adopt the Japanese method of paddy cultivation. Later on others took it up. Formerly when Block workers came to the village, they were viewed with suspicion and indifference and people were averse to accept any scheme even if it were offered free or on a meagre contribution. Under the Mukhia's leadership, they are accepting such development schemes as are suited to their needs and resources.

Co-existence and Conflict

There were some persons whose power, influence and

prestige were affected by the growing popularity of Simon Panna. Naturally, they began machinations to discredit him. They sought to organize opposition by forming factions based on diverse considerations. The first man to be affected by the new set-up was the village chowkidar, Deman Ram. He found that he could not now frighten people by calling the police on the slightest pretext. Ordinary disputes were settled by the traditional panchayat. More difficult cases were dealt with by the statutory panchayat. People did not go to court for minor things. Simon Panna exhorted people to shed their fear of the police and not to offer them illegal gratification. At one time his wife's brother's wife was captured for human sacrifice by professional sacrificers called *Otanga*. The police demanded bribe from his wife's brother and when the latter could not pay, he was sent up for murder by framing a false case against him. On coming to know of this, Simon went to Ranchi, met certain prominent people and saw the Superintendent of Police and the Deputy Commissioner. It was on the intervention of the latter that the police case was withdrawn and his wife's brother was set free. For some time the chowkidar remained aloof and sullen. But Simon always displayed friendly behaviour towards him. The chowkidar has now come round and accepted the present scheme of things as *fait accompli*. He has now started co-operating with the Mukhia.

In 1958, some of the ex-landlords of the neighbouring villages led by Kunjalnath Sahi of Hurhuri began to incite people against the Mukhia, alleging that the latter was supporting the government move for the consolidation of holdings. In the tribal areas people are so much attached to their piece of land that they dislike the very idea of consolidation and oppose it tooth and nail. Fed with such propaganda some people began to conspire to do away with the Mukhia. On getting a scent of this, high officials had to come to Kullu to save the situation. People were assured that consolidation of holdings would not take place against their will. Thus the move of certain interested persons to discredit the Mukhia was defeated.

During the panchayat elections of 1960, Bigla Mahto of Byasi was set up against him for the post of Mukhia. At his

back was a government official, inhabitant of Byasi. The latter was angry as he expected Simon Panna to show due respect to him. As Simon did not like to humour him without any reason, he became an enemy. In the elections, however, Bigla Mahto was badly defeated by Simon Panna, and since then the government official who is posted in another area has ceased to take interest in the politics of his home village.

Another contender for the leadership of the area was Ismail Sheikh. In the elections of 1960, he was elected Sarpanch or chief of the panchayat judiciary. His main complaint against Simon Panna was that he did not allow cases to go to the statutory panchayat. It so happens that contending parties first go to the Mukhia, as they know that he is fair and just and has no axe to grind. Simon generally arranges a compromise between the parties and the case is dropped. Thus parties do not even have to pay the panchayat fee of Rs 1.25 per case. As it is convenient to people, this arrangement has become popular. In the last few years, since 1956, only four cases have been sent to the statutory panchayat with the result that the power and influence of the Sarpanch is steadily on the decline. Now the Sarpanch has also realized that he has been left far behind in the race for leadership.

In the fight against these formidable rivals, the Mukhia has got solid support from three persons in Kullu. They are Hosen Pahan, Murla Ekka and Sheikh Sabar Ali. Hosen Pahan is the traditional leader of the village. He also became a member of the panchayat executive in 1960. The Pahan has all the weight of traditional authority and prestige. By lending these to the Mukhia, the latter's position has been strengthened. In the same elections. Sheikh Sabar Ali, a shrewd backward Muslim, who lived for many years in Calcutta and is therefore economically well off, also entered the panchayat executive and lent his support to the Mukhia. Murla Ekka, widely travelled ex-serviceman, also became a member of the executive in 1960. He too lent his unqualified support to the Mukhia.

The great esteem in which the Mukhia is held by the people of Kullu was evident to the author when he visited the village in October 1961. His jeep was stuck in mud about a

mile and a half from Kullu. In spite of all attempts it would not move. The Mukhia got this news when the author reached the village on foot. He at once sent about twenty to thirty young men to pull out the jeep, and all people obeyed him without a murmur. There is a feeling of unity in the village which is unparallelled. The prestige of the Mukhia is considered to be the prestige of the village and its people. This sentiment is very valuable for development work.

Fruits of New Leadership: Culture Change

It has been referred to earlier that the Mukhia has always taken a lead in accepting innovations introduced by the Block authorities. This has been facilitated by the transfer of the V.L.W. headquarters to Kullu in 1958. The Village Level Worker is a tribal and enjoys the confidence of the Mukhia and the people. When the Mukhia accepts a new idea or a new implement or a new method, others follow suit without any misgiving. Earlier, people had to go to Mandar, the Block headquarters, for revenue or mutation cases. The Mukhia invited the B.D.O. with his staff to Kullu. They camped there for three days and all the outstanding cases were settled to the satisfaction of the parties concerned.

Change has been most significant in the realm of agriculture. Formerly people used poor seeds. They have now been supplied with improved seeds for various crops. Seed multiplication is also going on, the Mukhia being an 'A'-class registered grower. Formerly no one practised *ropa* or the transplantation of paddy seedlings. Now four cultivators have adopted the Japanese method of paddy cultivation in their fields. The sale of chemical fertilizers has been increasing steadily. In green manuring, four or five cultivators have begun growing *sanai* now. Compost making was known before. It has now taken a scientific form and there are now 118 compost pits in the village. Some persons like Murla Ekka have undergone a week's training in compost making.

A multipurpose co-operative society has been organized in the village. It does not have a building of its own, but it has done brisk business in the sale of fertilizers.

Some new crops and fruit plants have been introduced.

Rainy potato was not known in the village before. Four cultivators who had taken it up made good profit. Sugarcane, also a new crop for the village, has been planted by five persons. Groundnut and sweet peas are also becoming popular. These cash crops will necessarily supplement the income of cultivators. Among fruit trees, mention may be made of papaya, lichi, mango, guava and lemon. Papaya and guava grown in the village are sold in the neighbouring weeky markets. Four persons are keeping improved poultry and it has added to their income. People have also taken advantage of the pedigree bull given to the Mukhia for fertilising local cows.

One area in which the new leadership has been particularly successful is that of communications. People of Kullu have come to realize that their future prosperity depends upon their ability to market their surplus produce. Due to the many improvements in agriculture, this surplus is bound to rise. But these would fetch poor prices if sold in the local markets to which goods can be carried in head-loads. If they can take their goods to Sons or Nagjua these very goods would fetch higher prices. Goods can be transported by bullock carts if there are link roads connecting Kullu with neighbouring markets as well as with the big market centres.

The Mukhia realized that the construction of link roads was a felt need of the people. He persuaded the B.D.O. to sanction these roads on 50% public contribution basis. As the schemes had been passed by the Byasi Panchayat, the B.D.O. sanctioned them early in 1958 and the advance was available by April 1958. As a substantial portion of the earth-work was to be done by the villagers, the Mukhia had to organize meetings in all villages through which these roads passed. As he had the co-operation of local village leaders, there was not much difficulty in getting *shramdan* from the people. The programme was arranged in such a way that the Mukhia was present in *shramdan* in all the schemes. This was to enthuse the people and to see that the work was carried on in full swing. In all places men, women and children worked for the whole day with a little break. At the end of the day's work they were given some money for drinks called *thakauni* or fatigue money. From the second day work was on wage

basis. In the wages also, people agreed to a voluntary cut as the work was for the general good. Thus, in about six month a network of six roads was constructed and Kullu became connected with Hondpiri, Murto, Kanjgi, Maddai Byasi, Chutio and Hurhuri.

The efficient management of the panchayat by the Mukhia is demonstrated by the different activities undertaken by it. The panchayat runs a grain-*gola* from which paddy is loaned out for seed or for domestic consumption at a low rate of interest. Repayment of the loan at this grain-*gola* shows that it is better run than the grain *gola* directly managed by the Government. The panchayat also looks after the management and protection of 68 square miles of forest in its area. It has also been active in the sphere of public health. In the year 1959-60, 213 people were inoculated against cholera and 142 people were vaccinated against small-pox in Kullu alone. Six village wells have also been cleaned with D.D.T. Through the efforts of the panchayat a post office has been opened at Byasi, two miles from Kullu. The villagers have greatly benefited due to this. The panchayat has also got a radio from the Public Relations Department.

Trends of Acculturational Change

This study makes it clear that the nature of the emergent leadership is different from the traditional leadership. While the new leadership is achieved, the old one was ascribed. The new leader is limited in his independence in decision-making since he functions in a democratic system. He has to carry the people with him. His character is marked by integrity, justice, fair play and resourcefulness. Partial acceptance and partial rejection of change and non-change merge together to form a new cultural blend. The value of certain traditional institutions like the Dhumkuria or youths' dormitory has been realized and the villagers are constructing a new building for it in Kullu. The Mukhia sees to it that the traditional panchayat functions actively under the presidentship of the Pahan and takes decisions on important matters concerning the village. It is seen in Kullu that people tend to respond more easily to stimuli which have some continuity or analogy with their traditional values and form of organi-

zation. The relative ease of culture transfer and adaptation to external stimuli for change has been attributed to what Herskovits[1] has called 'congruity of culture patterns'. The chains of custom have been pulled asunder in the face of directed culture change, but some customs are still holding the ground.

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1 Herskovits, M. J., Acculturation, The Study of Culture Contaet. New York, 1938, P. 134.

SOCIAL CHANGE IN CHOTANAGPUR

I

The field of Social Anthropology in India, as elsewhere, is being widened. The literature is growing and the tools are being refashioned to cope with the changed requirements. The fences between Social Anthropology, Sociology and Social Psychology are fast breaking down. The interdisciplinary approach is very much in the air. Researches in various parts of India are proceeding apace at the instance of the Research Programmes Committee of the Planning Commission. A wider coverage is attempted than is warranted by the tools of Social Anthropology. The gap between the persons who collect the data and those who integrate and interpret them has been growing. The investigator is no longer the author.

Studies in the field of Social change are not coming up in India although these would prove very fruitful as Hindu society has great time-depth. Tribal societies have been in contact with other cultures. Historical accounts are available. Secondly, in all areas development programmes are being taken up. These are making a deep impact on peoples' way of life. A study of social change in such areas would throw up not only problems of applied Anthropology but also throw light on the problem of communication. The few studies which have appeared in the field of social change merit attention.

Prof. I. P. Desai has tried to find out the degree and direction of change in Hindu joint family in a paper published in 1955. He has shown that co-residence and common kitchen have tended to disappear in certain instances but sentiments for the joint family are as strong as they were before and financial ties continue to bind the members of the joint family. Now the Hindu joint family in the town is crumbling down due to the impact of various factors. This has been clearly brought out by Aileen D. Ross.

Most of the studies on caste have devoted attention to its dynamics. Some of them have tried to shed light on the social processes involved in the dynamics of caste such as Sanskritization, Secularization and Kulinization. Social change in village India is highlighted in Professor Dube's book on 'India's Changing Villages'. He has highlighted the importance of cultural factors in any programme of directed change. Dr. M. S. A. Rao has brought out the implications of social change in Malabar. The present author has in course of a study described social and cultural change among two of the major tribes of Bihar, the Munda and the Oraon. The Anthropological Survey of India has made a study of culture change among the Munda of 24 Parganas. The Gauhati University has undertaken the study of culture change among the Lushai. Dr. L. P. Vidyarthi's recent report is expected to throw light on the impact of urbanisation on the tribals who form about 27% of the population of Ranchi town. Dr. K. N. Sahay has studied the social changes introduced among the Oraons due to the influence of Christianity. Some students of the Department of Anthropology at Saugar have produced good accounts of the changing family pattern among the Nair and Mapilla of Kerala.

The Seminar on 'Trends of Change in Village India' held at the National Institute of Community Development at Mussoorie did some very useful work in this field. The main focus of the seminar was on trends of economic and political change in village India. In course of a paper presented there, Professor Srinivas gave an account of the changing values and attitudes in India to day. Two paper dealing with the changes among Bihar tribes pointed toward the direction of change in that area. Changes in power structure in village consequent upon tenurial reform, the growth of education, the welfare programmes for the weaker sections of the population were also discussed. In some cases, this has led to the emergence of a rural elite. Changes in the occupational mobility in Indian villages have affected its social system to a remarkable degree.

A highly competent study on economic development and social change has been done in south India by Mrs. Epstein. T'aking up two villges in Mysore she has shown that only

where the new economic system is incompatible with features of traditional economic organisation, do we find a change in economic roles and relations. She has established a positive correlation between economic political ritual and organisational change with economiuc change as a determining variable.

II.

Chotanagpur, where the bulk of the tribals in Bihar reside, is for more than one reason specially suited for study in social change. Historical records about the social economic and political condition of the tribal in this area are available from the beginning of the 19th Century in government and missionary papers. These can serve as landmarks from which the study of social change can start. During the first four decades of this century. S. C. Roy produced a number of monographs on the Munda, Oraon, Birhor and Kharia. Though not a professional anthropologist, Roy was a shrewd and intelligent observer and employed all the techniques of investigation known in his time. With the passing of years, he became a seasoned anthropologist and his books give a faithful account of the tribes as he found them. All these tribes can be restudied and changes in their social system, both in form and content, can be discerned. There are, however, certain theoretical difficulties Roy does not mention the area of study and as some of the tribes are widespread, regional differences are marked. Secondly, Roy did not give adequate attention to the economic organisation of the tribes. With so many programmes underway for the economic betterment of the tribals, we are not in a position to assess the extent of economic change. Regarding the existance of certain important tribal institutions like the Dhumkuria and Parha, my own investigations among the Oraon have shown that some of Roy's sweeping generalizations or the impression gathered from his account is definitely misleading.

There is one more difficulty. The social background of the Chotanagpur tribes is very much different from that of African, Melanisian or even NEFA and Assam tribes. In the latter areas in tribal regions we have only tribals and no one else, at least till recently. In Chotanagpur in most areas, we have numerous Hindu communities living in tribal villages for many centuries. Of these some may have been tribals before, but now

claim and are recognised as lower Hindu castes. Others are migrants from other areas. In Oraon areas, the population pattern of all villages is so diverse that it is not possible to find a single village with less than half a dozen communities big and small. In Munda villages also there are a number of functional groups like the Panr (weaver), Lohra (blacksmith) Kumhar (Potter), Teli (Oil presser) etc. Their presence is of vital concern to the village economy, as for a long time it has tended to make the village more or less self sufficient. The economic relations between these functional groups and the dominant tribal community is regulated by what is known all over northern India as the Jajmani system. This living together for many generations at the same place has resulted in cultural borrowing between different communities. The interaction is not only on the linguistic plane but also on the cultural and biological plane. There are certain customs, certain festivals, certain words whose origin it is difficult to trace. One cannot say who borrowed and from whom. Though all these communities are by rule endogamous, there is no doubt that there has been a lot of miscegenation.

These alien elements in the tribal village were also important in another way. Being smaller in numbers, their contacts with their own caste took over a wide area and they were, at least before the coming of missionaries perhaps the only channel of communication between the tribal and the world outside. They brought new ideas, new customs, new concepts. They also provided a model for the tribals. If the latter were to gain acceptance in the wider Hindu group outside, they had to emulate the ways of this class of people.

III

Besides these groups there were other potent agencies of change. In point of time, the migration of tribals to work in the mines in Chotanagpur, jute factories and brick kilns near Calcutta, rail and road construction work in north Bengal and Assam and in the Tea gardens of Assam and Bengal, is the foremost agency. With the increasing pressure on land hundreds of tribals, both men and women go out to work for a few months between the winter harvest and the summer sowing. In some areas, there is not a single house in any village from

which one or two youngmen do not go out. This helps them meet their requirements for cash money needed for payment of land revenue, buying clothes etc. Most of these people return at the time of Sarhul festival which is held at the end of April. These people bring not only cash, but new fashions, new dress, new ideas and concepts. There are some others who migrate to the tea gardens for three to five years or for a longer time. They periodically send money and when they finally come back, their purse is full. When they settle down, they are anxious to see their importance and status recognised. When they left for the tea gardens, they were just insignificant people who could not make both their ends meet. Now they form the new rich class. They do not only have the money but have to cleverness to manipulate things in their favour. They are well versed in all the glib talk which makes their acceptance with the non-tribal government servants easy. Thus they try to upset the traditional power structure in the village and more often than not the Pahan are set at naught. These people have to a large extent been responsible for the breakdown of the tribal village organisation.

The missionaries have been working in Chotanagpur for more than a hundred years. There are a number of missions each competing with each other in social service, education and proselytisation. All over the world they have been one of most important agencies of social change. The religion of any primitive people inevitably reflects the social structure of the community in which it develops. Christianity reflects another type of a social system in which genealogical relationship is not so important. The church asserts universality. A basis is provided for broadening the concept of brotherhood in which not only kith and kin but strangers are included as co-religionists. Many barriers fell down but new barriers come up in the shape of different denominations. Christianity introduces a new kind of leadership and a new principle of social control. The priest becomes the all round leader, the path finder, the friend, philosopher and guide. The importance of the traditional leader immidiately goes down. The concept of sin and the fear of retribution is a powerful instrument of social control.

Unfortunately, the impact of missionaries has not uptill now received much attention. Some work in one Oraon area,

as I have mentioned earlier has been done. Christianity gives the tribal a new way of life new scale of values, new attitudes, behavioural patterns and concepts of reward and punishment. How is the tribal reacting to all this ? The study should not be confind to the converted tribals alone but include, those who are not within the pale of Christianity and yet have been profoundly influenced in the matter of ideas, dress etc.

The influence of education is also a fruitful area in the study of social change. The present day educational system in tribal areas, is to a large extent, divorced from their life and actual needs. Like Christianity, it is drawn from a different social system, and inculcates in the child a language made of thought, scale of values and behavioural pattern that is different from his own. If the tribal child remains in the school for a number of years, he becomes a misfit in his own home and looks to the town for some employment. The alien school teacher who has no understanding of a sympathy with tribal culture decides the tribal way of life which creates in his pupil an inferiority complex. He is the model to be emulated in thought, behaviour and action. Education makes a difference in the tribal way of life and level of aspirations. The impact of education on the tribes of Chotanagpur is being studied by a Research Scholar at the Bihar Tribal Research Institue for his Ph.D. Degree.

By far the most important factor responsible for rapid change is industrialisation. The industrial potentialities of the tribal areas of Chotanagpur have increased by the work of the Damodar Valley Corporation. The big industrial establishments in Jamshedpur, Mosabani and Hatia near Ranchi have opened up new avenues of employment. In the areas round these places, a large number of tribals have been uprooted from their land as well as from their traditional occupation, agriculture. Thousands of tribals have been transformed from quiet agriculturists into busy industrial labour. This is the start of a number of chain reactions which may ultimately change the face of the area. In a very short span of time, the tribals have been drawn into the vortex of industrial society. While tribal areas near about are being flooded with money and the standard of life is going up, traditional tribal culture ebbing away. The enormity of social change and its ramifications over wide areas of

culture are a standing challenge to the social anthropologist both from the theoretical as well as from the applied angle.

The Bihar Tribal Research Institute has already made a start in this direction. The report of a study on "Tribal Factory Labour in Jamshedpur" has been completed, while the data for the study of "Tribal Mining Labour" is being processed. The Department of Anthropology of the Ranchi University has already begun a study of changes taking place near Hatia.

Community development is an another important agency for social change. This is different from other agencies, as unlike that of others, its avowed object is socio-economic change for the all round development of the people and the area. The change in this case is deliberate, planned and directed. People are expected to change in a particular way in all aspects of life. Most of this programme is aimed at raising the standard of living of the people in the countryside. There is a large extension staff reaching down to the village level. The fact that so many government employees are now permanently residing in the village and are constantly moving about among people is in itself a potent factor of culture change. Improved agriculture, new education, increased emphasis on health and sanitation necessarily involve change not only in traditional techniques of production but also in attitudes and thought-ways. The introduction of Panchayati Raj in tribal areas also portends new changes. The traditional power structure in the village will be definitely upset. Attempts are being made to give a tribal slant to the programme in tribal areas. Workers are being given orientation in tribal life and culture so that the storm of change does not throw the tribal off his feet.

An individual adopts an innovation of his own free will when he becomes convinced that it offers him some kind of a reward, perhaps greater afficiency or more security or enhanced status. The individual must also be assured that the reward is worth the cost and the inconvenience. The resources at his disposal have a direct bearing on his action. This is clearly illustrated, in the case of the introduction of the Japanese method of paddy cultivation. Although some tribal cultivators realise that by this method they can raise their production, most

of them cannot adopt it as it is expensive and involves heavy outlay in the shape of fertilizers and labour cost. Besides that, line-sowing means a departure from the traditional method which is easier to follow.

When somebody is ailing, tribal herbs are used. If cure is effected the mati or ojha is brought in to diagnose the malady. When that method also fails, people turn to allopathic dispensaries. The latter system is not popular, as in many places the tribal patients are not treated as well as they would like and in some the medicines are too expensive. Wherever these difficulties have been overcome there is no prejudice against the new system of medicine.

People everywhere esteem mechanical efficiency. Cycles are being purchased by those tribals who can afford it. Sewing machines are a new source of earning money. In many villages we find tribals adopting tailoring as a subsidiary occupation. Similarly, there is no prejudice against riding a bus. All these innovations are welcome as they reduce work and distance.

In voluntary acceptance of change, the search for security is an important factor. Wherever the oppression of the landlords was greatest, people turned to Christianity as the missionaries shielded the tribals to a great extent. They also turned to Christianity to overcome fear of witches for the latter could no longer harm them. In one case the religious headman of a village was converted as he suffered from a malignant disease which the mati diagnosed to be due to the machination of witches. After conversion. he was cured by the medical care given by the missionaries.

Status and prestige offer an important incentive for social change. The dress of their alien neighbours is being adopted by those tribals who can afford it as it gives the latter acceptability at the hands of outsiders. One cannot expect seat in a bus unless he puts on good dress. Most tribals now keep a dress for going out which is different from one commonly used

The same is the case with the quick adoption of tea drink-

ing use of cups and saucers etc. Change begin when an individual seizes the chance of realising an accepted value in a new way. Persons, not the customs react under contact. Many of the individual's decisions regarding change are socially determined. In this sphere, the role of leaders is important. A change accepted by the leader of the community or the village is at once adopted by others without question as the common people have faith in his judgment. Sometimes, those who accept change are regarded as rebels in society. These are regarded as deviants for sometime but later on are accepted as lenders.

Standardised behaviour patterns may not interlock perfectly but the adjustment between them is such that changes in one always have indirect effects on others. One innovation leads to a chain reaction which ultimately produces change in the existing institutions. Establishment of industries in tribal areas lead to a number of chain reactions. The very decision to start an industry leads to land acquisition proceedings. Large numbers of tribals are uprooted from their traditional occupation. Outsiders in large numbers come to that area as engineers, contractors, technicians and skilled labour. The latter bring their own ways and vices. The economy of the region undergoes a change. Industry becomes the dominant occupation and agriculture is relegated to the background.

Similarly, the advent of Christianity set in motion a number of chain reactions. A change in religion leads to change in dress, in thought-ways, in food habits, in the attitudes to education health and sanitation and also a change in socio-cultural affiliation. Thus after a lapse of time, the Christian tribal ceases to be a typical representative of his community. There is a change in the authority system of the village, in the system of dance etc. Certain institutions decay and disappear.

In tribal society, kinship is an important principle of social structure. Every person is not only part of a household, but every household is part of a series of wider groupings like clan, tribe and village. At marriage, birth or death, the kin group is important. In some areas in the Munda

country the political organisation or Parha was also based on clans like the Guria Parha and the Sanga Parha. In recent time kin groups have been widely dispersed as people moved in search of livelihood to distant places. The result is that distant kinship ties have not in general withstood the recent pressures so well. The area within which kinship ties operate has contracted, though in some cases the sense of moral obligation to a distant kinsman is not entirely dead.

The Institution of marriage has also undergone change. If we study rituals in a non-Christian tribal marriage, we would not find much difference from those prevalent among the Hindu castes in that area. Formerly marriage was an arrangement between two kin groups. It was more or less a concern of the elders of both groups in which the boy and the girl had little voice. Many a marriage could not be settled due to the exhorbitant demand of brideprice. Now the role of kin groups in the forging of a wedlock is extremely limited. The choice is mainly of the boy and the girl. The elders merely give the stamp of recognition, if the rule of clan exogamy and tribal endogamy are not transgressed. If the established custom is not followed, the elders are helpless. Even if they impose a punishment, it is difficult to enforce it.

Economic institutions are also undergoing change. Production is now more individualised than before. The undertakings in which the co-operation of the kin-group, neighbours or clan was required are being managed by hired labour. The co-operative economic endeavours such as transplanting, weeding, harvesting, hunting and fishing about which Roy speaks so much are no longer generally found. In house building also, the help received has also been reduced. The economic functions of the youth dormitory in an Oraon village have disappeared to a large extent. The mode of payment for services rendered is generally by cash or kind rather than based on an annual contract. In economic transactions, more money is now changing hands than before. The role of barter is now very much restricted.

The changes from traditional modes and pattern of leadership in some tribal villages were studied by the present author. The impact of change can be seen on tradi-

tional leadership behaviour and statuses, leadership roles and sanctions, leadership characteristics, and on the nature of emergent leadership. Culture change has engendered new conflicts and stress. New leaders are rising to focal positions of power as different modes of political organisation and activity emerge through the development of Panchayati Raj. New leadership roles are introduced as new concepts of education, public health and economic development take hold. Individuals who provide leadership are more broadly recruited than was true under the traditional system. Leaders are not derived solely from the upper strata of the social structure as was formerly true. The present system allows access to position of respect and power to more categories of individuals than earlier. The basic change is from a closed system in which leader ship positions were, by and large, ascribed to a relatively open one in which leadership positions may also be achieved. Leadership roles are much more diffused and varied to day than formerly. In proportion to total population many more persons serve as leaders. Power is broadly distributed and its exercise is diffused along with new leadership roles.

Social mobility is much more evident today than before, since to day one may attain social prominence without having been born to rank. The old criteria for elevated social status still operate, but new criteria have also come into being. Performance based on special skills and recognised competance enables individuals from any stratum of society to achieve leadership status.

The tribals were used to hereditary traditional secular and religious leadership with very limited scope for election. With the advent of statutory panchayats the role of elections become very clear. It shook people's thought-ways more than the adult suffrage for Assembly elections as it was local in nature and people could see the person they had voted to power in action. In most cases, the traditional panchayats went down before the statutory panchayats. Formerly, the leaders were drawn from the dominant privileged community of the Khuntkattidars or Bhuinhars. Those who were privileged, till the other day were approaching the poorest villager for his vote. There was scope for talent to show itself.

Persons with ability in organisation, persuasive power, oratorial skill, some education and knowledge of men and affairs in the world outside could become leaders.

The morals of people are in a state of flux. One set of values is super-imposed on the other. People are no longer sure in any situation, as to which line of action they ought to follow'. Sometimes they choose one, sometimes the other. People's view of witchcraft, murders in certain circumstances, communal dances and free mixing between the sexes are some such areas of doubt and diffidence.

VI

Through community development efforts are being made at induced change. The impression which development workers have been able to make upon the tribals varies with the personal interest taken by the latter. Difficult communications in tribal regions makes the areas of impact limited. Many areas are left out entirely. Even in those areas which are comparatively easily accessible the problem of communication still remains. It is difficult for non-tribal workers to put their ideas across to the tribals. The non-tribals living in tribal areas being more progressive are able to take the lions share of the advantages. The result is that the standard of living of the tribals is almost the same as before New techniques in agriculture are sought to be popularised, improve seeds are distributed, fertilizers are made available, new cash-crops have been introduced but the total impact of this on the tribal is precious little. Co-operatives are not faring any better and people revert to their traditional calling after receiving training in some other craft in the Training cum production centres. In health and sanitation, people are taking to new ideas slowly. People do not seem to be convinced about most innovations but adopt some of them to oblige government officers who seek to popularise them. Changes in attitudes, ideas and beliefs due to community development are not till now traceable. With the introduction of Panchayati Raj, people's awareness of their own problems and their ability to solve them will steadily increase.

VII

When the impact of change on a social system is great, there is a conscious organised attempt on a part of a society's members to revive or perpetuate selected aspects of their culture. Linton calls this a nativitistic movement. Such a manifestation always concerns itself with elements, never with culture as a whole. Attempts to revive a previous phase in its entirety are blocked by a recognition that past and present conditions are in certain aspects incompatible, even the current phase includes a multitude of features that seem too trivial for deliberate perpetuation.

The history of the tribes of Chotanagpur from the middle of the 19th century has been marked by a number of such revitalisation movements. Unlike other areas, such movement acquired a political shape. An alien system of government, laws and landtenure which worked to their disadvantage and a new religion were too much for the tribal to swallow. Contact with Hindus and missionaries made the tribals see such aspects of their culture which were the hallmarks of their backwardness. Coming on the heels of the Sardari agitation, the Birsa movement* was the embodiment of the social, economic and religious unrest among the Munda. Buffeted by waves of repression and oppression and torn by despair, the Munda saw in Birsa a prophet and a saviour. Birsa gave to the disorganised and despondent Munda people, a solidarity hitherto unknown, a cause to strive for, a spirit and hope to live for. His religion is a combination of Munda belief, Hinduism and Christianity. He was as much a rebel against the zamindars, moneylenders and missionaries as against the government. So tremendous was the impact of his movement that for sometime the foundation of British rule in Chotanagpur was shaken.

Another movement which is still a force is that of the Tana Bhagats. Beginning as a reformative movements in 1913-14 under the leadership of Jatra Oraon, it took a political turn. Abstention from meat eating and drinking, faith in only one God, ceremonial purity and lack of faith in witchcraft were

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*See Sinha S. P. : The Life and time of Birsa Bhagwan, Ranchi 1964

some of its main characteristics. The Tana Bhagats wear Khadi, worship Mahatma Gandhi like a god and observe the 15th August and 26th January as national festivals. Their only songs are devotional and they are proud of having taken part in the non co-operation movement by non-payment of land rents.

Through these revitalization movements, the tribals of Chotanagpur tried to save the best elements of their culture and also achieve further changes quickly so that they could easily be accepted by the people among whom they lived. These movements have lost momentum, but present-day tribals are trying to recapture the glory of their ancient culture by reviving some of their dying institutions, and investing them with new values. The Dhumkuria or the youth dormitory among the Oraon is a case in point. Formerly the institution was in disrepute and acculturated Oraon were ashamed to admit of its existence in their village. But now-a-days the Dhumkuria is being revived as a school for traditional Oraon learning, a school of music and dance. One of its important functions to serve as a sleeping house for the youth has been allowed to lapse. Similarly the institution of the Parha in the Christian Munda areas has been revitalised. Youths have been trained to handle its affairs, with zeal and ability. In some areas these panchayats for groups of villages are so active that statutory panchayats are without work. The nativistic sentiment can also be seen in the new appraisal of tribal dances. The fact that the dances have been able to secure prizes for the state of Bihar in a country wide competition, has enhanced their value further.

VIII

Any considerable change in culture necessarily involves changes in social integration in the social structure. Social change consists essentially in processes of integration and disintegration. Disequilibrium and maladjustment are the result of uneven change, a failure to fit traditions to novelty or an alteration of one aspect of culture without alteration in other aspects. It involves pressure to change, so long as it continues, there must be change. As a force of change disequilibrium

must always press towards its own resolution, towards equilibrium. Social structures of primitive societies present a similar picture of breaking down and building up.

Anthroplogists have hitherto devoted most of their attention to the disintegration of social structures. The fact that integration is also taking place, though in terms of another type of structure, has been largely overlooked. The anthropologist is obliged to probe deeply to discover it. Despite the obscurities, analysis of reintegration is just as essential for an understanding of social change as the investigation of disintegration. We need both if we are to know how one type of social structure develops out of another.

In tribal Bihar integration in terms of another type of structure is taking place. With the growth of education, the tribals are being drawn into the services and professions in larger numbers. In literacy, the figures show a definite upward leap. A tribal service class family living in Ranchi for a generation or two is indistinguishable from others of the same class. Most of the tribals are bilingual and there is no difficulty of communication except in the deep interior. Their standard of living compares favourably with others of their income level. In social mixing also there is no diffidence and tribals and non-tribals meet on equal terms. Deeper studies of the new synthesis would be very rewarding.

IX

Regarding the direction of changes all groups everywhere are becoming westernised and the gaps between tribal societies and other communities are being filled up. Communities are becoming less homogenous as one passes from the interior to the suburb and from suburb to the city. In the village most of the tribals are agriculturists. There may still be some co-operative activity. Magicians and spirit doctors still hold their sway to a limited extent and the mental outlook of each person is like that of his fellows. In the town the division of labour is complex. Tribals work for pay and their reward instead of being traditional, is dependent upon fluctuations of free economic competition. Persons are obliged to hire labour. The differences are correlated with modifications in social struc-

ture. In the tribal village women are generally subordinate to men, youngers defer to elders and everyone has various obligations to kinsfolk. In the town women are free, the young go their own way and ties with nearer kin alone are important. Emphasis on religion also alters. In town kinship ties are broken, neighbours are strangers and the authority of established belief is removed.

X

At the end I wish to point out certain gaps in the field of the study of social change in Chotanagpur. Most of the tribes in Chotanagpur are peasants. We have little or no information about the expansion of monetory exchange on a peasant economic system. Social values tend to be attached, to the new economic or consumption effects. Even if income and consumption effects are not large, the new experiences acquired in the production and exchange processes in gaining and using money units concerned, become matters of social evaluation and tend to emerge in differences of social status. In areas deeply affected by industrialization such aspects can be very fruitfully studied.

In talking of social change, it is necessary to talk of economic change since the social elements are so often mediated through the economic just as conservatism in the retention of traditional tools may be in part a compound of aesthetic and psycho-physical elements involved in rhythmic use and quality of results and of status interest in skill of manipulation, so the welcome given to a new tool may be partly a recognition of its better technical quality, the novel skills which can be developed, with it and the social esteem which its control may bring. In their final adoption their probable effect on income and consumption levels count most.

Social changes associated with new or expanded technology emerge through economic changes. It is not possible to isolate changes due to the introduction or expansion of money from those due to other aspects of a development process. When youngmen go out from the village for wages, the important social changes that come out may be as much due to the patterns and results of their new type of work as to the fact that they get money for it.

With the expansion of money, the types of services and goods for which it is used multiply. This involves a re-estimation of goods and services available in the community and may sometimes lead to a reorientation in moral values as well. Another possible effect is the confusion regarding purchasing power which exists for sometime. This gives enormous economic advantages to the middlemen. The introduction of wage economy may reduce margins of skill, ability and responsibility between workers in respect of traditional types of work. The advent of money in wage-labour form tends to alter the economic contribution of women. This has repercussions in the social sphere too.

As the influence of monetory economy grows there is a tendency for the scale of social relations to widen as new contacts are formed. It may lead to fragmentation and realignment of social units. Lineage and other kin groups cease to be effective and holding units, the joint family tends to break up and changes occur in the relations of husband and wife through labour or differential production. There may be an exaggeration or reversal of economic differences between generations. Different frames of reference for social experience appear and authority structure may alter. As the processes continue, new structural arrangements may be formed with new class alignments and new patterns of leadership. There may be shift of symbols not only of wealth but also of social status and political authority.

DISTRICTWISE POPULATION O

Name of the Tribes	Patna	Gaya	Shahabad	Saran	Champa-ran	Dar-bhanga	Monghyr	Bhag-pur
1. ASUR	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
2. BAIGA	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	..
3. BANJARA	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	..
4. BATHUDI	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..
5. BEDIA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
6. BHUMIJ	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..
7. BINHJIA	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
8. BIRHOR	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..
9. BIRJIA	...	1	...		...	...	...	..
10. CHERO	4	5	2743	57	686	...	...	..
11. CHIK BARAIK	4	...	..	...	...	...	...	..
12. GOND	328	13	1369	...	...	6	26	11
13. GORAIT	6	49	...	...	...	...	109	2
14. HO	115	...	...	...	1	...	279	...
15. KARMALI	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
16. KHARIA	10	...	1	...	...	...	32	124
17. KHARWAR	12	273	12124	...	6	...	303	1269
18. KHOND	...	...	...	...	5	...	...	..
19. KISAN	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	
20. KORA	...	...	3	..	...	...	6100	18
21. KORWA	...	...	314	2	...	...	10	...
22. LOHRA	1	5	29	...	3	1	56	2
23. MAHLI	15	...	...	...	...	...	476	4
24. MAL-PAHARIA	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	17
25 MUNDA	124	17	212	...	1	1	11	1
26. ORAON	446	80	5270	3	2065	6	67	3
27. PAHARIYA	...	20	...	...	...	...	...	
28. SANTAL	90	126	2	...	...	1	38801	428
29. SAURIA PAHARIA	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	
30. SAVAR	7	...	1	...	...	...	...	..
31. UNCLASSIFIED	349	4	105	25	112	2	337	1
Total Tribal population	1511	593	22174	89	2879	18	46610	64
Total population	2949746	3647892	3218017	3584918	3006211	4413027	3387082	1711
Percentage of population	0·05	0·02	0·69	...	0·10	...	1·38	

SCHEDULED TRIBES IN BIHAR

Saharsa	Muzaffer-pur	Santal Parganas	Purnea	Hazaribagh	Ranchi	Palamau	Singbhum	Dhanbad	Total
...	...	...	16	...	4999	804	...	...	5819
...	...	...	...	77	238	634	...	...	951
...	...	21	...	13	...	...	7	...	42
...	...	...	...	...	5	2	449	...	456
...	...	3	2289	19867	15931	2	15	133	38241
...	...	1130	...	46	867	...	98514	500	101057
...	...	...	...	...	6644	...	..	75	6725
...	...	...	...	1233	947	1	257	...	2438
...	...	4	...	...	2296	1728	...	...	4029
...	...	...	2	2	37	27309	...	...	30845
...	...	...	...	31	29311	834	587	3	30770
...	...	329	192	1604	13160	1272	14734	373	33521
...	...	347	...	182	3177	37	753	106	4793
...	...	14	...	47	98	7	453988	197	454746
...	...	6394	5	16458	2470	8	946	228	26509
202	...	540	1429	117	95956	18	9423	11	108983
470	...	2640	5740	957	7639	65582	849	69	109357
...	...	2	...	782	15	...	10	...	814
...	...	30	...	3	3854	8106	16	...	12011
...	...	6198	2	4	34	...	964	332	13824
...	...	242	1	195	1801	13056	647	4894	21162
38	...	3428	1706	1228	69928	5261	10381	502	92609
2	...	19140	68	5184	24359	458	12010	5064	67979
511	...	42815	228	...	4	...	71	...	45423
2	22	438	3644	27588	465093	9235	118932	3429	628931
1037	4	6230	26624	15608	564774	83390	22084	3912	735025
...	...	348	...	889	406	10605	...	...	12268
5311	4	877485	76042	173780	804	182	217574	108244	1541345
...	...	54324	365	...	...	...	765	1	55606
1	...	3	...	18	4	...	1527	...	1561
31	9	973	1540	4980	2662	58	4304	312	16930
7605	39	1023078	120713	270693	1317513	228589	969807	128385	4204770
1723566	4118398	2675203	3089128	2396411	2138565	1187789	2049911	1158610	46455610
0·44	...	38·24	3·91	11·30	61·61	19·24	47·31	11·08	9·05

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